FORTEAN TIMES

strange phenomena - curiosities - prodigies - portents - mysteries

MORE PHOTOS OF MORGAWR, p15

Planet & stars, lost & found ... 3; Bleeding statue ... 6;
More new British wildlife ... 8; Cornish monsters ... 12;
PETER ROBERTS on the "Aliens among us:" ... 18;
The "mystery booms" of SW England ... 21.

50p : $1·00.

19

FORTEAN TIMES

A Contemporary Record of Strange Phenomena

FORTEAN TIMES is a non-profitmaking bimonthly miscellany of news, notes and references on current strange phenomena and related subjects. Formerly THE NEWS. Affiliated to the International Fortean Organisation (INFO) in continuing the work of CHARLES FORT (1874-1932). Edited and published by Robert JM Rickard. Assistant Editor: Steve Moore. PO BOX 152, LONDON N10 1EP, ENGLAND.

SUBSCRIPTIONS. 1 year (6 issues) £3.00/USA $6.00. 2 years (12 issues) £5.40/USA $10.80. Airmail: add £1.50/USA $3.00 per year to sub. rate. Annual index issued free to subscriptions current at the time – otherwise 30p/USA 60¢. For details of availability of back issues and other deals, including joint subscription rates to INFO JOURNAL, and THE LEY HUNTER, see our address label. NB: **OVERSEAS SUBSCRIBERS** should add 10% to their cheques to cover bank exchange commission. Payments payable to FORTEAN TIMES.

CONTRIBUTIONS of articles, artwork and notes on related subjects are always welcome and duly credited. **YOU CAN HELP BY SENDING US A COPY OR CLIPPING OF ANY ITEM YOU THINK WILL INTEREST FT READERS** – just add a note of the date, source and your name (for the credit) – all clippings go on file and will be published in due course. Please don't assume we know about the item – there are very few duplications.

RIGHTS: All artwork and articles in FORTEAN TIMES are the copyright of the artists and authors and the views expressed are not necessarily those of FORTEAN TIMES. Uncredited material is by the editors – heading artwork by Hunt Emerson. Notes may be freely quoted in return for credit to FORTEAN TIMES, with our address.

UK ISSN 0308-5899

DECEMBER 1976

Over Christmas, your editor finally made a foothold in London. Now comes the hard task of getting back on schedule both with FT and the indexes for 1975 and 1976. This December 1976 issue appears in January 1977, for which I offer apologies, but it couldn't be helped. There may be a slight delay to the Feb.77 (20) issue but by April (21) we should be on the rails again.

PLANS

1977 will be the turning point in our career. I want to double our circulation (at least) by the end of the year, as a step to ultimately getting FT published as a professional job. The Ley Hunter has similar ambitions. Indeed if Paul Devereux and myself are to give you the services you need and deserve we need to be free to devote our full time and resources to the task. Our aim is to have FT and TLH published to a professional standard and distributed both nationally and internationally without sacrificing our involvement with the subject or the reader for sheer commercialism. We are convinced that there is enough popular interest in strange phenomena and earth mysteries to support the enterprise...but ultimately it is you, the hard core who've supported us to date, who are the key, and to whom we'll always listen. Without you the venture would be a meaningless exercise in commercialism. The money is secondary to the genuine interest in disseminating facts and research as honestly, independently, and as quickly as possible to all interested parties. I hope you'll back us further.

In order to cost and plan for the best we find ourselves in need of specialist advice, preferably from someone who is familiar with our approaches and subjects. Do we have an accountant and a solicitor out there among our readers, or anyone who can advise on the business side of magazine production? We're serious enough to be thinking in terms of formal (but flexible) structures. If you could play a part in our development, let's hear from you.

LETTERS

While we encourage letters on all matters related to FT and its coverage, it is not physically possible for your editor to reply to all of them, or even promptly, except in cases of immediate business or editorial concern. Sometimes, to save (punitive) postage, we send replies with the FT mailing. I apologise in advance for their terseness. Be patient with us, please. Thanks.

Cont on p28...

ASTEROID MISSES EARTH

An asteroid estimated to be several hundred yards in diameter, named Adonis, grazed by this earth a mere three-quarters of a million miles away on 20 October, last year. Dr Brian Marsden, director of the Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams, at Cambridge, Massachusetts, said: 'In space distances that was close indeed.' The AP reports said that the only minor asteroid to have come closer in recent times was Hermes, in 1937, which passed by only 500,000 miles away.

Officially listed as '1976 UA', it was discovered by accident on the night of 24/25 Oct by a student at Mt Palomar Observatory, William Sebok, who called it to the attention of a researcher, Eleanor Helin, who managed to photograph it. But she was not the first – a colleague, Charles Kowal, had photographed the object, said to be the smallest astronomical object ever observed, on 22nd Oct, and did not find out until the excitement sent him scurrying for his old photos. Adonis is reckoned to orbit the sun every .775 years, the shortest period of an asteroid on record, and apparently won't be giving us another close shave for hundreds of years. Minneapolis Star, 2 November 1976; Times, Daily Mirror, Daily Telegraph, South China Morning Post, 3 November 1976; St Louis (Mo) Post-Dispatch, 7 November 1976; New Scientist, 11 November 1976. Cr: Mark A Hall, Ion A Will, Mrs V Martin, John Hitchens.

This accidental discovery is all the more interesting because the previous December Dr Marsden's Bureau issued a statement that Adonis would make its 1976 approach in February! South China Morning Post, 8 December 1975, giving an AP dispatch, quotes Dr Marsden that Adonis will 'pass as close as 1.3 million miles or as far as 40 million miles, a close call by astronomical standards.' When it turned up in October it was only three-quarters of a million miles off - an astronomical error by any standards. What went wrong, fellas? (Cr: Ion A Will).

NEW STARS

Fort had some choice things to say about the number of astronomical discoveries, many of them important ones, by amateurs with more limited equipment than the professionals -- read New Lands. He was also quite vitriolic about the predictions that fail and the accidental discoveries (vide the story above) that also feature in modern astronomy, despite its practitioners' pride in their mathematical precision, updated theories, and computer-controlled scanning. Anyway - here are two quite recent discoveries of stars by amateurs.

Amateur astronomer George Alcock, who has previous discoveries to his credit, was in his back garden in Peterborough, on the night of 21 October 1976, scanning the sky with his binoculars. His knowledge of the sky is famed and respected; Alcock says he noticed the star, heading for nova, instantly - beating the professionals with their giant telescopes. He contacted others in the British Astronomical Association, who confirmed his sighting, and cabled the news to the Smithsonian, and later that same night the nova was confirmed by spectrograms of the new star by Lick Observatory. For other details see New Scientist 28 October 1976.

The other amateur is a postman, Graham Hosty, of Crossland Moor, Yorks, who located a new star (to be called Nova Sagitte 1977) with his backyard telescope. These are the only details to hand at the time of going to press - from the Sun, 14 January 1977 - which adds that Graham is only the second Briton in 15 years to find a nova. It seems they don't know about George's nova (above), which incidentally was in the constellation Vulpecula.) According to the London Eve. News 13 Jan, the discovery has been confirmed by the International Astronomical Union. For Astronomy professors with one eye on next years' equipment budget we can add that according to the Daily Mail 14 Jan, the telescope Graham used was in fact half of an old pair of binoculars he had bought for £10 and was on the verge of throwing away

because 'one of the prisms was loose.'

While we're on the subject, the Novosti Bulletin No.16363, reported that on 30-31 August 1975, astronomers in the Crimea located a new star in the constellation of Cygnus as it flared-up more than 10 million times its usual brightness.

LOST PLANET FOUND

Professor Elena Guskova, of Leningrad, has worked out the dimensions and mass of the hypothetical planet Phaeton, which once occupied the orbit between Mars and Jupiter. She bases her study on the magnetic properties of meteorites that reach earth from that region now occupied by a vast belt of innumerable asteroids. Phaeton, which suffered a stupendous cataclysm, possibly due to a collision in space, may have been smaller than this earth but hundreds of times larger than the moon, said Prof. Guskova, who studied over a thousand meteorites from all over the world and found that many had a small magnetic field of the same magnitude and direction, and may have been fragments from the same source. Novosti Bulletin No.16178. Would any Velikovskyan care to comment on how that squares with the master's teachings?

NEW PLANET VANISHES

Professor Richard Hodgson, of Dordt Colledge, Sioux Center, Iowa, took a leaf out of the amateur astronomers' notebook, and began stargazing from his backyard. Close to midnight on 23th October 1976, he was studying an asteroid in the constellation of Pisces when 'a fast-moving object' suddenly came into view, 'like a star, but about 1,600 times fainter than what can be seen with the naked eye.' Convinced he had sighted a minor planet or asteroid, Prof Hodgson contacted Dr Marsden's Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams, who alerted other astronomers to the object - no one else has been able to confirm it.

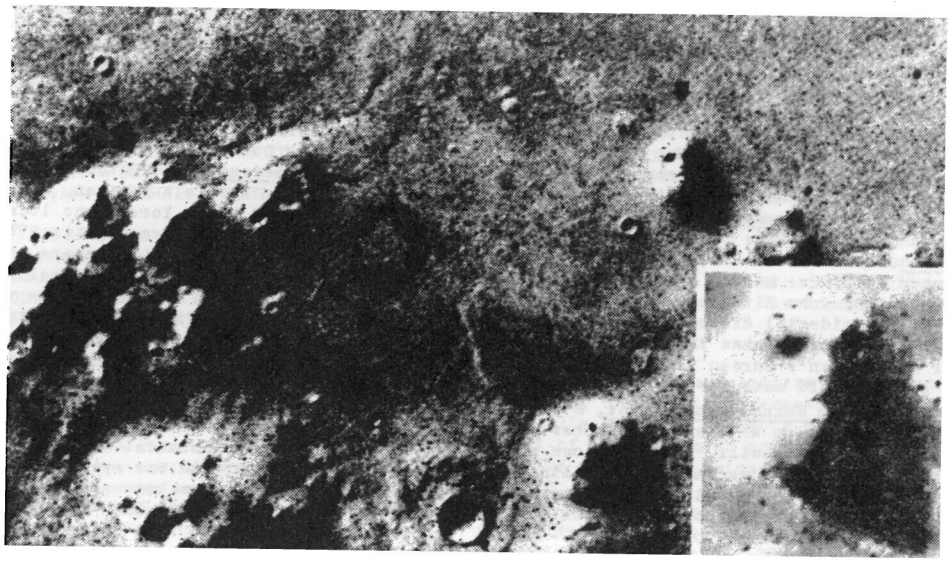
Hodgson said there were about 2000 known minor planets in the solar system, and to see a new one was fairly rare 'because there are not many people looking.' This object appeared about halfway between the earth and the moon, Hodgson said, and he suggested it might be one of the Apollo planets that orbit the sun. Minneapolis Star, 30 October 1976. Cr: Mark A Hall.

FACING UP TO MARS...

In response to our request last issue for any clipping of the Face on Mars, our thanks go to David Dunthorn, who sent the detail below from Science News 7 August 1976.

It was taken by Viking 1 during its approach to Mars as the sunlight shone at a 20^{0} angle to the curious domed mesa 1,162 miles below.

Thanks also to Dave Fideler, who sent the larger scene (taken from Ancient Astronauts January 1977). This shows the relationship between the face and the curious complex of apparently pyramidal formations on the left. For scale, the face is over a mile wide. Are we looking at an alien Sphynx and pyramids? Lets hope we learn more!

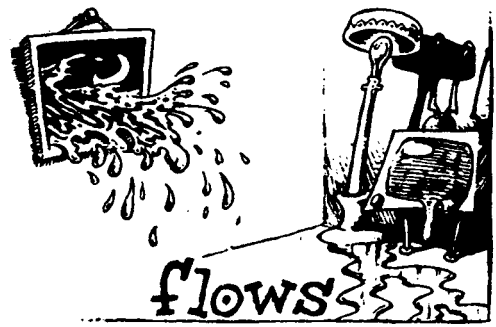


THE TENTH PLANET, etc.,

According to the Novosti Bulletin No. 16237, Professor Gleb Chebotaryov, of the Institute of Theoretical Astronomy in Leningrad, has calculated that there should be a tenth planet to our system, out beyond Pluto at about 54 times the radius of earth's orbit. Its volume and mass should be about the same as earth's, with a diameter of between 8000 and 12,000 km. His calculations were based on an analysis of the perturbations in the orbit of a comet known as '1862-3' which appears to be drawn towards 'a planetary body' which has so far remained 'invisible'. Prof Chebotaryov also thinks there may be an eleventh planet, 100 times earth-radius out from the sun and twice as big as earth. It appears that the Prof's theory cannot be tested until 1992, when '1862-3' is due for a reappearance.

I discovered, in the file here, a clipping from the Daily Mail, 1 May 1972 (Cr: Nigel Watson), that astronomers of the Livermore Radiation Laboratory, California, believed they had evidence of the existence of the tenth planet. A team led by Joseph L Brady worked on perturbations in the orbits of Halley's Comet and two other (unspecified) 'celestial bodies' with a computer. It suggested a body three times the size of Saturn against the constellation of Cassiopeia - this is near the center of the Milky Way which is quite bright, making it almost impossible to locate 'Planet X' visibly or by radio-telescopes.

The same piece wryly comments that this 'Planet X' was calculated by a schoolboy, Graham Conroy of Stockton-on-Tees, whose thesis was sent to the British Astronomical Society three months earlier (ie in February 1972). Graham, of course, had the advantage of not having a computer.



PERSISTENT PUDDLES

A puddle outside the Underground station at Leicester Square, London, defied experts for two years up to the time of a report (which appears in the London Evening News 31 January 1975.) This report says that water-board gangs and experts had followed up every clue and sign, dug a veritable lunar landscape of holes (which emerged in cellars and occasionally put the phones out of action) but were unable to find the source of the leak. On the surface the puddle was plain to see, regularly blocking the exit on the corner of Charing Cross Road and Newport Street, and causing London Transport to have at least one man on permanent mopping duty.

Intrigued, I went to the corner of Newport and Charing Cross and was mildly astonished to see evidence of the puddle still there. I asked the newspaper-seller, who was mentioned in the report as losing business, if they ever found the cause. 'No,' he said. 'They say they have, but they haven't. It's still pouring in down there - go and have a look! They don't even try anymore. Once, they put a dye in the water-pipes to see if it leaked out anywhere, but the water that comes up here is crystal clear, like spring water.' I took his advice and went down into the Tube station and found the tunnel to the Newport Rd exit, lined with phone-booths, barricaded with a 'No entry!' sign. I pushed past and saw that it was dug up at the end with a puddle across the whole floor.

On the whole this is a pretty innocuous story. A Water Board official said that the mains pipes were put down during the war and tended to get porous in parts and the leak could be anywhere. But it isn't anywhere; it consistently floods the same spot, and has done for over three years now. If it was a spring why haven't they located it yet? Perhaps any London-based dowsers might like to try their hands on this. Let us know. Now for a different tack, but one which extends the notion of persistent puddles into the possible teleportation of water...

From 5th to 10th July 1975 mysterious puddles kept appearing in unlikely places in the house of Clyde Frederick, of Ayersville, Ohio - on floors, a piano-top and even inside drawers. Mrs Frederick said: 'The ceilings and walls were never wet. The water seemed to be coming from nowhere.'

At 10pm on 5th July the Fredericks left their house for an hour and returned to find the kitchen floor flooded. Thinking a pipe had burst, Clyde shut off the main supply tap and they began to mop up. Then they found water on the bathroom floor and on the piano and the living-room rug. By the time they had mopped up these too and returned to the kitchen, big puddles had formed there. They called a plumber who spent the next day searching but found no sign of any leak, yet the Fredericks repeatedly found pools on their floors, the piano and inside cabinet drawers, and a few other places that were nowhere near any pipes (even if you assume a spontaneous leakage from points all over the house). This happened everyday until the 10th when the phenomenon stopped as mysteriously as it had begun.

The plumber, George Voigt, said he'd never encountered anything like it in his 40 years experience. He checked all the pipes and possible sources of condensation and is confident there were 'no leaks of any kind.' Yet, he continues, 'I'd open a wooden kitchen cabinet drawer and there'd be half a gallon of water in it. I picked up a rug with an 18-inch wet spot...but the floor underneath was dry. It was really eerie!' Harold Root, manager of the Defiance water department, also came to check the house, declared the absence of leaks, and added: 'Right before my eyes, little puddles formed all over the bathroom floor! It's a mystery to me!' National Enquirer 2 September 1975.

This phenomenon is no stranger to us, and a primer, with references, appears in my forthcoming book, Phenomena, with John Mitchell. For the moment we must refer you to the ubiquitous Fort for two of several spectacular cases. One took place in a house in Eccleston, Lancs, in February 1873, and was reported in the Chorley Standard on the 15th of that month. The elderly inhabitants were driven from their home by 'torrents' of water while the ceiling remained dry throughout this indoor rain. (Books p570f). The other is the famous incident at Swanton Novers rectory in Norfolk, where during August and September 1919 (see national papers during this period) there were constant flows of oil, water, methylated spirits and Sandalwood oil from the walls and ceilings which always remained dry upon examination. (Books p577ff).

Fort was interested in the question of 'human agency' in the sense that very often an unhappy or ill or dying or pubertal person seemed to be the focus of the phenomena, in the same manner as has been suggested for cases of poltergeistery. This connexion still needs exploring and it's my guess will yield many exciting and fruitful discoveries.

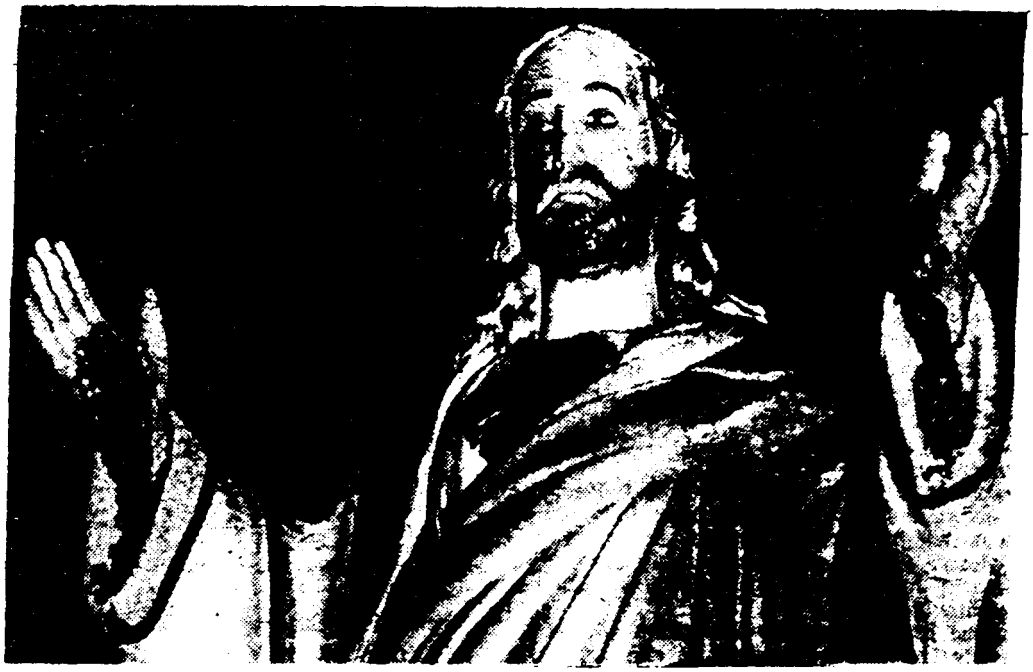
BLEEDING STATUE

In Phenomena, Michell and I follow Fort in suggesting that the puzzling puddles, indoor showers and miscellaneous seepings are part of the same phenomena as their religious counterparts, the weeping and bleeding icons and statues. As we were gathering material for that section the following case came synchronously into our hands.

In St Luke's Episcopalean Church, in Eddystone, near Philadelphia, is a 28-inch-high plaster statue of Christ which bleeds from its upraised hands. The bleeding was first noticed the Friday after Easter 1975, and like the classical stigmatics, bleeds on Fridays and Holy days. The first occasion took place during a fervent prayer in the home of Mrs Ann Poore, of Philadelphia, who had received the ordinary commercial statue as a gift the previous year. As hundreds of people began turning up to see the figurine, she decided to donate it to the church. Father Olszewski, of St Luke's, says that since it went on display in November 1975 many hundreds have witnessed the flows of blood. He said: 'It stands on a shelf 10 feet above the altar, where nobody can touch it. It has bled as long as 4 hours. I know there can be no trickery. Several times I've seen the palms dry, then, minutes later, observed droplets of blood welling from the wounds.'

Father Olszewski called in Dr Joseph Rovito, a respected Philadelphian physician, to conduct tests on the blood. He said that the blood is 'obviously fresh' when it oozes from the palms, but laboratory analysis shows it to be 'of apparent great age!' 'Fresh blood,' said Dr Rovito, 'contains millions of red cells. The older it gets the fewer red cells - but even after a few weeks there are usually millions of cells left - yet this blood has only an occasional red cell. It is so old we can't even determine the blood type.' Dr Rovito even X-rayed the statue in an attempt to locate hidden reservoirs and the like, but found nothing to account for the appearance of blood on the hands.

Also called in was a Father Lovett, from Corbin City, NJ, who studies religious phenomena. He told the National Enquirer 20 January 1976, that at first he was 'very skeptical' but now 'totally convinced' the phenomenon was genuine. 'I've personally taken the hands off the statue - they are held in place by wooden dowels - and examined them.



They're solid chalk, nothing else...and (they) bled profusely even as I watched in astonishment.'

Father Olszewski said: 'Sometimes it bleeds more profusely than others - the blood will flow down the plaster robes of the statue in a stream. Incredibly, the blood seldom runs off the statue. Its robes are now encrusted with dried blood.' This detail reminds us of of an observation of tears on some weeping icons, that the tears vanish at the foot of the picture; and of the stigmatic, Domenica Lazzari, d.1848, (whose case we give in Phenomena - sorry if the plugs are getting boring) from whose skin the dried discharges would vanish, some of these flows of blood having been observed to have flowed uphill!

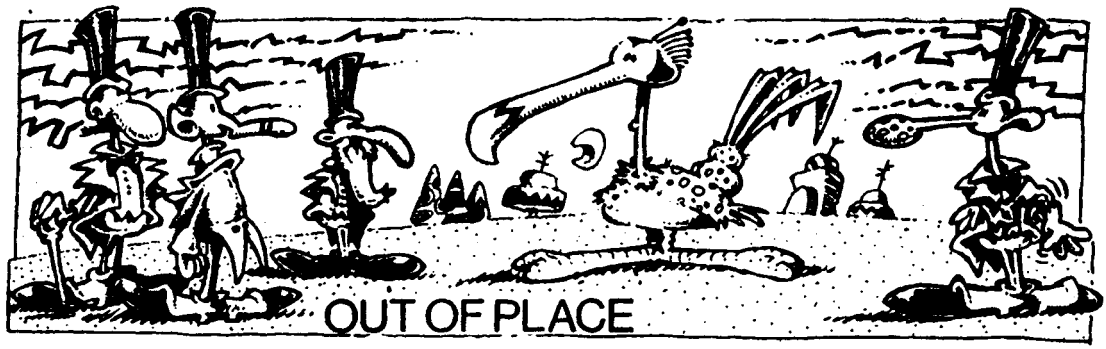
Needless to say, the clergy involved in the Philadelphia stigmatic statue case believe that somehow the blood of Christ is being transported through time to the statue's palms 'to call attention to religion again.' In a way it's disturbing to think that there is no evidence to the contrary!

WEEPING CROSS

The Pretoria (South Africa) News 17 July 1976 (Cr: Chris Holtzhausen) reported on the annual weeping of the 'miraculous' cross, made in 1919 to commemorate those killed in the battle of Delville Wood on 20 July 1916. The cross stood in the Carbineers Garden by the Maritzburg City Hall until 1950 when it was moved to a niche under a concrete dome in the Garden of Remembrance in Maritzburg. According to one official, the cross has wept resin from its knots in each of the 56 years since its making - usually, fittingly, and with wonderful timing, during the annual commemoration service for the fallen men. The seepage has noticeably increased during the last five years and it was seriously doubted that such a small piece of wood could go on producing resin for over half a century.

Maritzburg's director of parks, Mr PN Smith, was quoted, saying: 'The concrete dome above the niche acts as a heat trap and this naturally affects the resin flow.' He is conveniently forgetting that for 31 years the cross weeped annually at its former site without the benefit of a 'heat trap'. The enigma persists!

Next issue: the recent spate of mysterious explosions and fires; attacks on animals; mystery illnesses; and last summer's ladybird (and other) swarms.



The saga of Britain's new wildlife continues unabated. Celia Haddon, writing in the Sunday Times Colour Magazine, 26 September 1976, briefly mentions a few species that have established breeding colonies: mink, coypus, the rabbit, the grey squirrel, 'edible dormice', Bennet's wallabies, 'racoon dogs' - not to mention numerous kinds of insects (see Peter Roberts' article elsewhere this issue), reptiles and birds, or alien invaders from the plant kingdom. We collect stories of these invasions because we delight in keeping track of the changes in our environment - even if naturalists get rather stuffy about 'naturalising' the new immigrants.

Another aspect is the importance of keeping some kind of record of the escapes from captivity of exotic animals - naturally we are more interested in those which are not recaptured. Ms Haddon mentions that the minks escaped from a farm a few years ago and have now spread rapidly from Devon to Cumbria. She says of our old friends, the Indian porcupines of Devon (see News 8/17): 'A pair of crested porcupines escaped from a Devon wildlife park and began to breed. Though the Ministry of Agriculture claims to have trapped all of them, unconfirmed reports of porcupine at large still continue.' (Cr: Peter Roberts, Steve Moore).

We have notes on escapes, captures, and the turning-up of animals of which there has been no record of escape. In the latter case it is usually assumed that some private animal-lover has illegally imported the creatures which managed to escape, the luckless owner being too frightened of the legal consequences to notify the authorities. We have no way of knowing, especially as there seems to be no control or registration of the ownership of exotic and dangerous animals, the only hurdle being the quarrantine regulations.

Our interest is in exotic animals at large in our countryside, and the flurry of panic among the authorities when they poke their heads out of the undergrowth. I've warned of the inadequate responses of the press and authorities, but a definite scenario repeats itself each time - the press treats the subject facilely and is ready to drop it if the mystery shows signs of becoming 'serious'; the zoo authorities are quick to say they have had no escapes; and the poor police are forced into often futile searches, which when (or because) they are unsuccessful, force the police spokesmen into dismissing the original sightings as either hoaxes or mistaken observations. They each forget the previous sightings, and will forget the current one too - until the beast turns up again. It seems to be left to the likes of ourselves to correlate these events into patterns. Anyway, here is the current collection of animals where they - officially - shouldn't be:

WILD HOGS

On the 6th July 1975, drivers on the M6 near Sandbach, Cheshire, were startled to find themselves overtaking a pig heading North, apparently unworried by the roaring traffic. By the time a police patrol crew was alerted, it had vanished - there was no sign of it on the road. A police spokesman said that it was a mystery, especially as no one had reported losing a pig. Daily Express 7 July 1975. Cr: Nigel Watson.

A domesticated pig at large doesn't seem like an exciting enigma, but a wild boar would be. One was hit and killed by a vehicle on a forestry road on the estate of the Earl of Cawdor, near Nairn in Scotland. The wild boar has not been seen outside captivity in Scotland since the 19th century - this one was a year old. The Highland Wildlife Park, near Aviemore, about 40 miles from Nairn, has a breeding pair, but they and their offspring are all accounted for. The Park's director of information, Willie Newlands, said no others are known to be in private

collections and that it was apparently impossible for the dead boar to have come from 'original Scottish stock.' All concerned remained baffled, and that's the last we heard. Daily Telegraph 16 March 1976. (Cr: John Michell).

This would be a good place to record the sudden appearance of at least 3 wild boars in Hampshire (yes, 'Surrey Puma' country) in the Autumn of 1972. (I have included these events in my Southern England mystery animal sighting lists in INFO Journal 13 and News 14). Throughout the summer of 1972 there had been vague reports of a strange animal in the Hook, Odiham, Hartley Wintney area of Hampshire but we don't have any information on these sightings.

About 9.30pm, 5 August 1972, a man knocked on the door of Det. Constable Bernard Startup's house, in Linden Ave, Odiham, to tell him there was a wild boar in his front garden, eating his young fir trees. As they watched, it over-reached itself and fell into a fishpond. Bernard quickly blocked his driveway with his car, turned on the headlights, and dashed inside to phone for help. Some of his colleagues arrived and they tried to lassoo the beast, but it escaped into the road. The policemen trapped it in another garden with their cars and successfully roped it - then a vet tranquilized it. The 200lb boar, with 2" tusks, was eventually taken in by Marwell Zoological Park, where an expert said that,officially, boars have been extinct in England for at least 400 years. The police phoned around and no zoo or private collectors in the South had any boars missing. Aldershot (Midweek) News 8 August 1972.

A few days later, on the 10th, a woman living at Up Nately, near Odiham, saw 'a big black animal' which looked like a boar, dash into woods near her home. She phoned the police who arrived with tracker dogs. All they found were some tracks, and the dogs followed the spoor into the woods and along the banks of a canal - but didn't find the animal. Aldershot (Midweek) News 15 August 1972.

On 16 August, a man cycling to work past the Lord Derby pub, in North Wanborough, near Odiham, saw 'a funny looking pig' in a field running with some horses. 'It had a long tail with a sort of tassle on the end and it was dark grey with a kind of pointed head. I reckon it weighed about a hundredweight.' It ran off into nearby woods - and a police search later found no sign of it. Aldershot (Weekend) News 18 August 1972.

It is interesting to note that there were many sightings of the mysterious catlike creature known as the 'Surrey Puma' (neither limited in location to Surrey, nor in form to puma) during this period - but the next we hear of a wild boar is on the 2nd September when Frederick Ratky spotted a strange animal feeding on one of his barley fields, at Moor Place Farm, Bramshill, north of Hartley Wintney. Ratky was out hunting a fallow-deer buck which was causing damage to his crops. He shot the beast, and as it began to run away, shot again killing it. It was a wild sow weighing 2½ hundredweight. Daily Echo 4 September 1972 (Cr: Loren Coleman); Aldershot (Weekend) News 8 Sept.

Police and zoo spokesmen again confirmed that there are no known wild boars living in the wild in this country - Dr Maurice Burton, the naturalist with an opinion on most mysteries from the 'Surrey Puma' to the Loch Ness Monster, said they had not existed in the wild for the last 100 years (which clashes somewhat with the figures of 200 and 400 years we have previously been given.) Even so - the mystery is how, if these animals have not been let loose by or escaped from surrepitious collectors, they could have existed, breeding in the wilds, all this time without being detected before now. The same problem exists in relation to explanations of the aquatic monsters in terms of physical creatures. Recent 'wild' notions that do account for the anomalies have been proposed, ranging from Fort's idea of teleporting animals, to FW Holiday's revival of the ancient idea of a genius loci, a spirit associated with a geographical location which materializes and dematerializes according to laws we have yet to discover.

Farmer Ratky promptly came under fire himself from naturalists and animal lovers - a spokesman for Marwell Park said: 'It is absolutely disgusting that this farmer should shoot the animal.' Mr Ratky countered by pointing out that it was a danger to smaller animals and children, and would be almost impossible to find in the high bracken and 2000 acres of forestry on his land. 'Besides,' he said,'who would pay for the damage to my barley?' With almost commendable defiance, Ratky seemed to relish telling the authorities that he had the carcase cut up, stuck in his freezer, and had eaten the liver already. Aldershot News 8 Sept 72.

In the same report, the Marwell Park spokesman hinted at the existence of a third wild boar - but were not telling in case some nasty farmer pots their pig.

HYENA IN SUSSEX

After I had published my listings of 'Surrey Puma' sightings (referred to above) both Nigel Watson and Loren Coleman wrote telling me of a few I had missed. These will be included in my next listing (whenever!)- but one bears mention here. The story was

picked up from the Times 23 July 1971, by FSR Sept 1971, to the effect that police were hunting a wild animal in the Ashdown Forest, Sussex, which attacked a dog belonging to a farmer on the forest's edge. The report continues: 'People who have seen the animal in the forest, including two policemen, describe it as like a puma, black and tan coloured with streaks of yellow, and pointed ears.' (My underlining.)

I wrote to the farmer, Mr Alistair Whitley, of Outback Farm, Mutley, on the south side of the forest, whose eyeopening reply came six months later when I'd forgotten all about it. He said the animal haunted his farm from the Spring to the Autumn 1971.

'Our first signs were over-large "dog" pawprints on the woodland paths, and portions of half-eaten wild rabbits in the cattle drinking troughs in the fields. Our first clear sighting was when it seized our little pet dog (a Tibetan spaniel, about 10lbs in weight) at a distance of about 12ft. I managed to throw a shovel and hit it causing it to drop the dog and make off. Subsequent and many sightings could be condensed thus: very heavy strong dog with fierce eyes and round pricked ears, yellowish in colour splotched with darker marks. It spent much time lying in whatever field our sheep-flock was in, which frightened us, but in fact it never attacked them. (Mind you, it was not with us at lambing - March - or it might have been a different story. It didn't arrive til early May.) It appeared to "camoflage" itself with the sheep to catch rabbits. It urinated in all the water troughs, and was excited by our little dogs - (we kept them shut in the garden after it came into the farmyard to catch one).'

'We were very lucky in being helped by Dr John Lisgoe, a marine biologist who lived locally, and a Professor at Sussex University, who helped us collect pawprints both in plastercasts and digging up the actual earth, which he took up to the Curator of the British Natural History Museum, who positively identified (the beast) as an African Spotted Hyena, from hairs and prints. We were warned that it was a very formidable animal which couldn't be doubted if you'd met it as closely as we had. I had a good shot at it in late October as it stood by the wood-side, but whether I killed it or just terrified it away I cannot say. It crawled into the dense undergrowth and we didn't dare follow in case it was wounded. Neither our family, nor neighbours, have seen or heard it since.' This shows how press reports must be taken carefully - in this case the 'puma' turned out to be almost certainly a hyena - but where in God's name did the hyena come from - and where did it go?

WALLABIES AND KANGAROOS

In my letter to Farmer Whitley I asked if he had ever encountered any of the wallabies said to be breeding in the forest. He thought there weren't any there at all. He said he knew some foresters, and his family often ride in the forest, and none of them, to his knowledge, had ever encountered an unidentified leaping object - but he did know that wallabies and kangaroos 'are always escaping' from a private park between East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells. Hmmm, I thought. The Ashdown Forest colony of Bennett's wallabies was formally recognised in a study by FJ Taylor-Page in the Sussex Mammal Report 1969. It is conceivable that they were severely depleted by the severe winter of 1962/3, as was the Peak District breeding colony, but unlike the latter never fully recovered and died out. Some recent wallaby sightings and escapes in the Sussex/Hampshire/Kent region are given in News 9/18 - here are some that have accumulated since.

But I think the colony in the Ashdown Forest continues - there have been several references to it recently. A letter to the Daily Mirror 17 December 1975, begged to be assured of the existance of the Derbyshire colony. A brief article by Joe Steeples in the Daily Mail 5 August 1975, on exotic UK wildlife, quoted Dr Gordon Corbet, deputy keeper of zoology at the Natural History Museum, on the survival problems of the two colonies, both from harsh winters and curious tourists. Celia Haddon also refers to both colonies (see our opening reference) - and a photo of a Derbyshire wallaby appears in the Daily Mirror 16 September 1976, again appealing for tourists to keep from trampling all over the wallabies' food, and this also refers to the Ashdown group.

This latter datum says that 3 wallabies had been killed by day-trippers' cars in 1976 alone. We have no notes of these, but we do know that one was killed by a car at Garboldisham, in Suffolk. According to the Daily Mirror 26 June 1975 (the collision happened the day before), the wallaby was one supposed to have escaped from Barnham Zoo, Suffolk, eight miles away, about three months before. Another wallaby turned up in a road near Whipsnade Zoo, in Bedfordshire, in early August 1975. The lady who nearly ran over it, stopped off at the zoo to inquire if one of theirs had escaped. Apparently it was not one of theirs. Daily Mail 4 August 1975.

There was a rash of kangaroo-sightings in Indiana and Illinois towards the end of 1974 (see News 9/18f for a brief resume). We

have had only two notes since then, both from last year. On 7 April, Harry Masterson, out walking his dog, at Rock Island, north-western Illinois, reported seeing a kangaroo hopping through his neighbour's yard. Montreal Star (Quebec) 8 April 1976. Cr: I. The other kangaroo was spotted near Clear Creek Canyon, west of Golden, Colorado, on 17 August, by a citizens' band radio operator. He called a policeman who tried to trap the beast near the city limits, but the 'full-grown' animal hopped away through some clay pits. Denver Zoo said they had none missing. Tulsa World (Oklahoma) 18 August 1976. Cr: Tom Adams, Tim Church.

RACOON, POLECAT & PORCUPINE...

Police are said to be baffled by the discovery of a North American racoon near Daventry, Northants. Sunday Mirror 21 November 1976. Back in News 9/16, we noted that during a hunt for a bear on Skipwith Common, Yorks, the Flamingo Park Zoo, near Pickering; had to admit that one of their racoons had escaped. Neither bear nor racoon was found despite the convenient layer of snow for tracking. I suppose it's possible that in a year it could have moved south to Daventry.

Here's a little tale that ties up quite conveniently - but we're supposed to be suspicious of such convenience. Anyway, I'm quite proud of having put two separate clippings sent by different readers, a year apart, together so neatly. From the Darlington & Stockton Times (Co. Durham) 7 August 1976 (Cr: Paul Screeton), we learn that what experts believe to be a polecat turned up 'some weeks ago' under a garden shed in Ashville Ave, Norton, Co Durham. It seemed quite tame so two families looked after it. The story came out because the animal was daft enough to get bitten on the stomach by a rat. Experts are quoted saying that there are no known polecats in the wild south of Scotland, and the only captive one belonged to a family in Whitby. George Iceton, who looked after the animal, doesn't think a polecat could be this tame - 'It's probably a ferret,' he said. Well - we just happened to have in our polecat file two notes from the Scunthorpe Star (Lincs) - the first, of 25 April 1975, announcing the escape of a polecat ('the animal resembles a ferret...') from a house in Burringham Rd, Scunthorpe - the second note, dated 2nd May, merely said it had not been seen or recaptured. Cr: Nigel Watson. I guess if racoons can go south, polecats can go north!

It's a long way from Devon to the Salisbury Plain - at least for porcupines. The Scunthorpe Eve. Telegraph 21 April 1975, told of the sighting of a 35lb porcupine in (unspecified) woods on the Plain, and of experts attempting to track it down. They say it is a porcupine of the North American variety, which may be an error in reporting or an indication that we now have two species of immigrant porcupines at large. The Devon animals are identified as Indian crested porcupines. Cr: Nigel Watson.

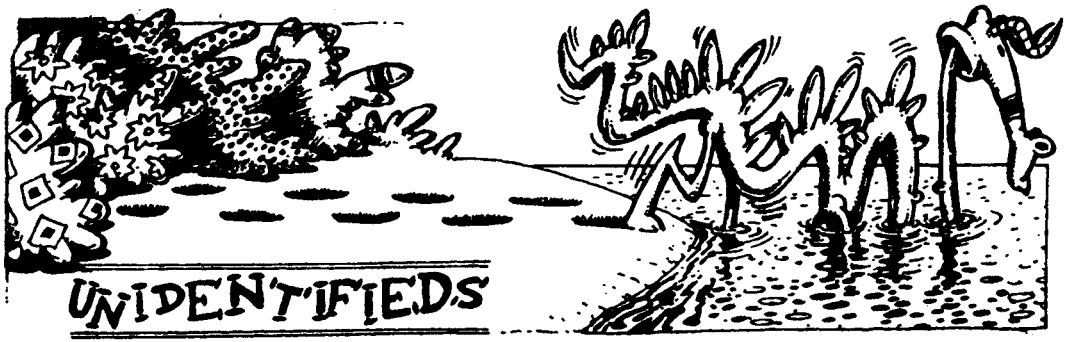
MONKEY BUSINESS

The Daily Express, 12 August 1976, reported that a monkey had been seen in fields near Gainsborough, Lincs. (Cr: Ion A Will).

Nigel Watson sent us clippings from the Gainsborough News 13 & 20 August 1976. It seems there were three sightings of a monkey in the Blyton - Northorpe area. The first was on the 9th August by a woman hanging out her washing who saw the animal among some plants before it scampered across a field. It was about 2ft tall, dark brown and timid. Another lady, who saw it run across a road on the 7th (this is the first sighting, but she didn't come forward until news broke of the other sightings - sorry about that) described it having 'bright eyes, pointed ears and a square face.' The later news report is mainly about a woman who lost her seal-point Siamese cat a few weeks before the monkey-sightings and wondered if the people weren't seeing her cat. One would have thought that the gaits of a cat and a monkey were immediately distinguishable, even if one somehow overlooked the fact that the cat had a collar and is a creamy white with dark-brown 'socks', ears and tail! Ole Charlie Fort would have said that our datum is one of transmogrification (sorry!). That a cat vanishes, and a monkey appears in its place. Continuity. It could just as easily become a racoon or a hyena. Do we have any data on vanishings of cats in areas where other animals mysteriously appear?

Who knows? But a baboon dashed past a string of policemen chasing it through gardens in the Clewer Hill district of Windsor, Berks - and vanished. The item in the London Eve. News 30 September 1976 says 'It is thought to have escaped from Windsor Safari Park.' Don't they know? Couldn't they check? I'd guess they were guessing, just as I could guess that it was one of the four still at large in Worcestershire after a mass escape of 80 from a safari park in the Wyre Forest on 8 July 1974, (see News 9/15 for stories of this, and the escape of a large number from another park in Co Durham the following month).

Next issue we shall have some stories of lions, leopards and pumas, wolves, and snakes and things.



MORGAWR UPDATE

It's been a few issues now since we last had any data on Morgawr, the Cornish sea-serpent (see issues 15 & 16). Some of the latest developments have been quite exciting - a couple of dramatic sightings at sea; and two sightings by Doc Shiels, our man in Cornwall, on the second occasion of which he managed to take photographs. But first let's get up to date with the known sightings since Chambers and Rogers saw two monsters, one large and one small, off Parsons Beach (FT16/18).

DOC SHIELS - FIRST SIGHTING

As you may know Doc Shiels was busying himself collecting all the information and accounts (published and private) on Morgawr. He established a coast-patrol hoping to spot the beast himself, but to his disappointment it seemed he was always in the wrong place as the sightings occured literally all around him.

This was the time of the long hot summer (see FT18/8ff), and Doc took his wife and four of his kids down to Grebe Beach, about 9.30 for a morning swim, after which they lazed on the beach in the sun. Doc had brought his binoculars just in case and took to glancing out into the Helford river estuary with them. Three times he saw 'something which immediately disappeared by the time he could locate it through the glasses. It was 'a dark shape of a head and long neck...about 500 yards away'. A few minutes later he saw two humps appear, moving through the water - and again it vanished. Then a head on a long neck rose up and he shouted to his family.

Christine, Doc's wife, wrote an account to the Falmouth Packet 9 July 1976: 'We missed it that time, but within a few short minutes the kids started pointing and yelling, "there it is...the monster!" Finally I saw it (or them) for myself. It was at the edge of my vision, and when I tried to focus on the image it simply and suddenly wasn't there. After two or three attempts to get a clear picture of the thing by staring at it, failing each time, I decided to allow it to be coy, to stay in the "corner of my eye" so to speak. This worked.'

'For several seconds I saw a large, dark, long-necked, hump-backed beast moving slowly through the water, then sinking beneath the surface.'

Christine says she was writing because Doc was unwilling, firstly because he felt no one would believe him, having had his name linked with Morgawr almost since the business began in the Autumn of 1975, some people might think this sighting 'convenient' or otherwise dismiss it because Doc is a professional entertainer (ie stage-magic and puppetry); and secondly, because Doc was full of doubt himself. Christine wrote: 'Now, my husband, of all people, suggests that we were all hallucinating because of the unusual heat and strong sunlight. In short, he seems rather thrown by his own family and himself actually seeing Morgawr!' Doc told me he hoped for another encounter to confirm the matter, if not convincingly for others, then at least to himself for his own peace of mind.

THREE LITTLE DRAGONS...

The same issue of the Packet had a letter from Roy Peters, 17, a hotel worker from Helston. It seems he was skin-diving off Grebe Beach (a few days before the 9th) when he startled three 'serpent-like things' about five feet long, swimming along quietly just beneath the surface. 'They had skin like seals, but because of their ugly heads and necks were definitely not seals,' he said. They escaped into some weed-beds.

TWO SEA SIGHTINGS

Again, a few days before the 9th July, two Cornish fishermen, John Cock, 40, of Redruth, and George Vinnicombe, 55, of Falmouth, were 25 miles south of Lizard Point (now there's a good correlation for lexilinkers). The sea was flat with visibility of several

miles, when they saw something appear ahead. 'If we had not reversed engines we would have been right on top of it,' said Mr Vinnicombe. 'It looked like an enormous tyre about 4ft up in the water with a back like corrugated iron. We must have woken it up because a great head like an enormous seal came out of the water. It just turned its long neck and looked at us and very slowly submerged. The body was black and the head was grey. It had a big rounded back with lumps on the top like prehistoric monsters have. I've been fishing for 40 years and have seen nothing like it.' Mr Vinnicombe estimated its length at the waterline was about 22 feet, and its weight at about several tons. Western Morning News 9 July 1976. Cr: Jeremy Beadle. This was one of the few sightings in the whole Morgawr saga which made the national press - see the tiny paragraph in the Daily Mirror also 9 July.

The other sea-view was made by Patrick Dolan, of Cardiff, an art historian and enthusiast for single-handed sailing. Mr Dolan set out from Falmouth in his sloop, Daisy, en route to Kinsale, Ireland, via the Scilly Isles. On 11th August he was about 30 miles NNW of the Scillies when he saw a peculiar disturbance in the water near sunset. 'I could see quite distinctly a kind of worm-like shape in the water and the neck was about 8ft out of the water. It was about 40ft long and propelled itself with an undulating movement. It was moving at 10-12 knots and overtook me. I must have had it in my vision for about 20 minutes.' Mr Dolan said he had had plenty of experience sailing but this sight made him 'extremely nervous' and was like nothing he had ever seen before. Falmouth Packet 24 September 1976. Cr: Doc Shiels.

THREE MORE FALMOUTH SIGHTINGS

On the evening of 27 August, Bramwell Holmes, director of a Penryn furniture firm, returning through Carrick Roads with his wife and son from a trip to St Mawes in their motor-boat, saw two humps rise up, off Restronguet Point. 'The water seemed to boil before they broke surface.' They were a dark greyish mottled colour, and were each about 2ft high and 5ft across in the water. 'The sun was just setting, and there was hardly a ripple...then the water boiled before it appeared. We saw it three times in ten minutes. It was very interesting but also a little frightening. Whatever it was submerged but came up again briefly after we had turned our boat around to get a better look at it.' This time they caught a glimpse of a 'snake-shaped head.' West Briton 2 September 1976 (Cr: Doc Shiels); Falmouth Packet 3 September 1976 (Cr: Doc Shiels, Peter Hope-Evans).

Twelve days later, on 8 September, Donald Ferris thought he saw an upturned boat drifting towards Gyllyngvase Beach from the direction of Swanpool, on the south side of Falmouth. Mr Ferris was walking his dog on the beach, at 7.10am, and the first thing he noticed was that the diving raft was at a 'funny angle', and then saw the 'boat' between the raft and the beach. 'It was a massive thing, 50 to 60ft long. When it got closer, I realised it was a creature like a giant eel, at least 60ft long and dark grey. As it submerged, its back reared out of the water in a hump formation, within 40 yards of the shore.' Falmouth Packet 10 September 1976 (Cr: Doc Shiels, Peter Hope-Evans); West Briton 16 September 1976 (Cr: Doc Shiels).

A few days later, on the 12th Sept, Morgawr, or something at least, was seen again on Grebe Beach. Brother and sister, Allan and Sally White, on holiday from Gloucestershire, were walking near Durgan at 8.30am, when they became aware that something strange had happened. 'We didn't really see it all that clearly but something long and brown definitely slid off the beach into the water. I suppose it was about 15 to 20ft long. Neither of us was frightened. It was more surprise than anything else. I've certainly never seen anything like it before,' Allan told the Falmouth Packet 17 September 1976 (Cr: Doc Shiels). Interestingly, we note a degree of perceptual confusion in the sighting, for Allan said: 'At first we thought it was a dog, but it was obviously too big for that. I can't really describe it...except for the brown colouring. One minute it was on the beach and the next it had gone.'

A MONSTER IN 1926

We have alluded to previous monsters in the Falmouth area (FT15/16, & FT16/19) - another old sighting has surfaced, this time in pages of the West Briton '50 years ago' - alas they don't give a precise date.

'A strange catch was effected by Messrs. B Rees and B Gilbert while trawling in an auxiliary motor boat about three miles south of Falmouth harbour. After hauling their trawl for an hour, rather longer than it usually takes, they discovered that their net contained a strange monster about 20ft in length. The animal had a tail quite 8ft long and a beak about 2ft long and 6ins wide. It had four legs, connected to the body with armour-like joints and covered in thick scales. The creature had a wide flat back covered with matted brown hair, some of which the men brought ashore. The animal was brought up from the sea bed. The monster managed to escape, ruining the net and leaving behind a big splat of blood. Plymouth Marine Biological Observatory authorities were unable to offer any opinion on the nature of the beast.' West Briton 19 May 1976. Cr: Doc Shiels.

DOC SHIELS - SECOND SIGHTING

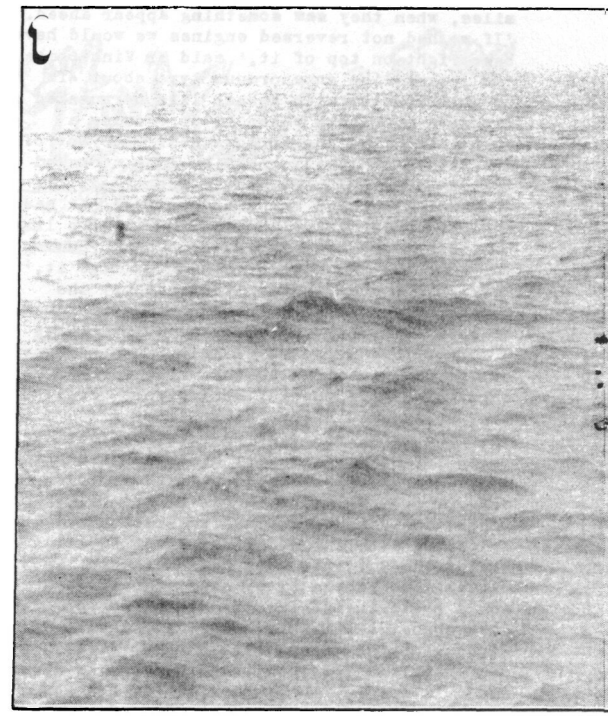
In mid-September, Doc told me he was going to intensify his searches for Morgawr - he had retreated for a while after his previous (and ambiguous) encounter, to let his subconscious dwell on the matter, and to give a chance to natural divinatory processes..to see if the Powers that Be could arrange for him and Morgawr to meet. Sometimes you can try too hard, on your own.

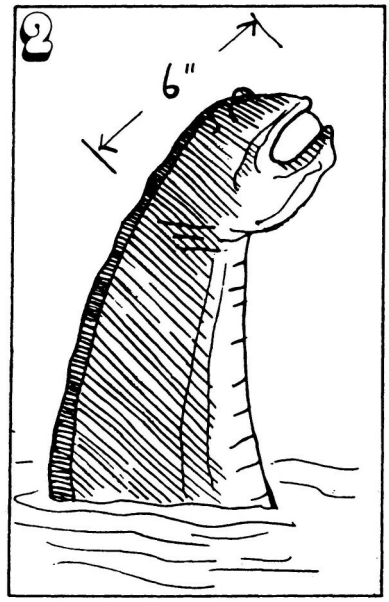
On 17 November 1976, between 9.30 and 10.00am, Doc was with David Clarke, editor of Cornish Life, walking near Parsons Beach, below Mawnan Old Church. David was taking photos of Doc for a projected feature; 'It was cold...and I was all for leaving when (Doc) started shouting that there was something in mid-river,' he later told the Packet 3 December 1976 (Cr: Doc Shiels). 'I saw a small dot moving towards us, which I presumed to be a seal. It came across the river to within 60-70 feet. It started to zigzag backwards and forwards, and I could see movement in the water behind the head which suggested it was a great deal longer than a seal.' David Clarke took some photos through his telephoto lens but (Oh cosmic Trickster!) the camera jammed, giving double and triple exposures. The Packet reproduced one of Doc's photos, which David agreed showed what he had seen. It seems that David, like Doc earlier, began to doubt the evidence of his own eyes, and was 'reluctant to confirm the existence' of Morgawr. (More on this below. David Clarke 's own story will appear in an imminent issue of Cornish Life. See also Dinsdale's letter for a comment on Clarke's double exposures, below.)

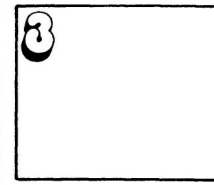
Here is Doc's description: 'The animal we saw was small by monster standards...no more than fifteen feet in length. The head, very small in relation to the thickness of the long neck, was about 6 to 8 inches long, like a coconut. It had horns, stumpy little things, which Dave saw clearly through his viewfinder. One of my three pictures shows a profile very similar to that of Nessie in the famous Wilson picture. We saw a double-humped back when it first appeared...though most of our pictures show just the head and part of the neck...the head was extremely ugly, like a big snail's head with those odd little stalks.'

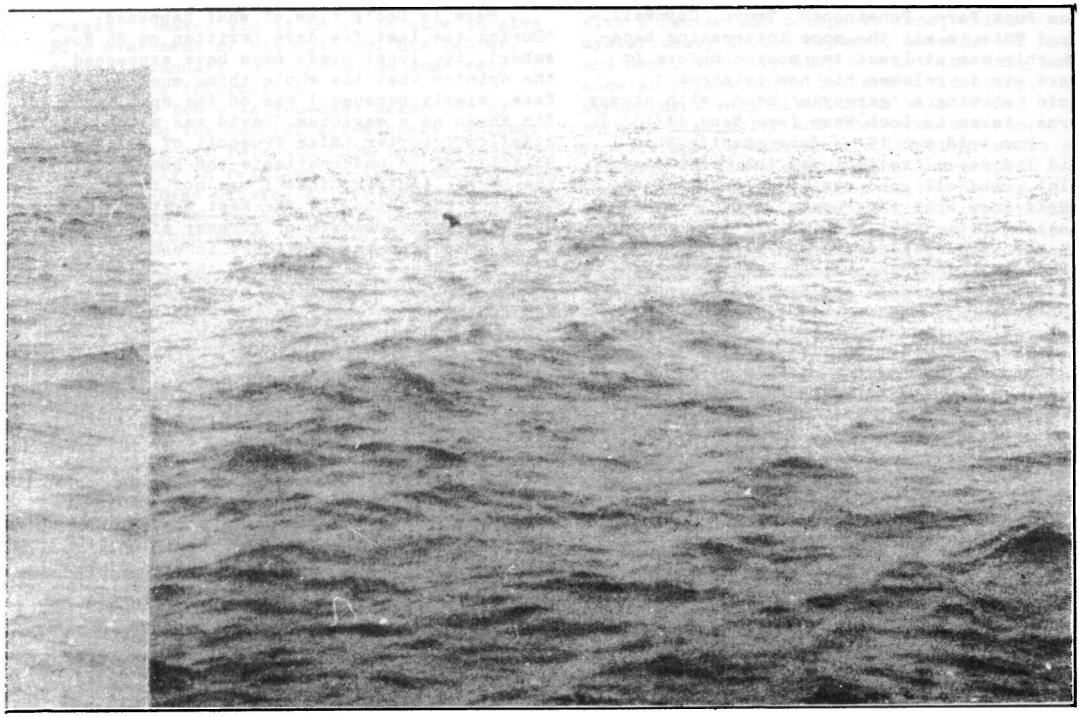
((On this point I've discovered we have not yet recorded the first sighting of Morgawr, made one evening in September 1975 off Pendennis Point, by Mrs Scott and Mr Riley, of Falmouth. They saw a hideous, hump-backed creature 'with stumpy horns' and bristles down the back of its long neck, dive and resurface with a live conger eel in its jaws. (Details from Morgawr by A. Mawnan-Peller,

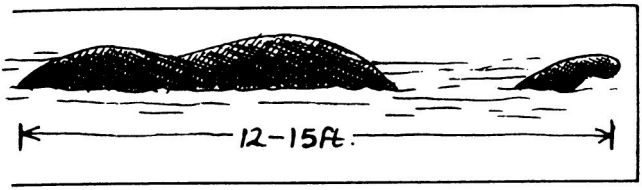
CONT.on P.16...

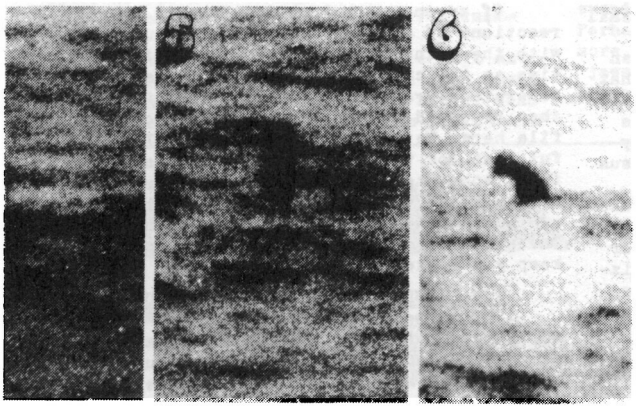












17 November 1976 - apx 9.30am.

1) We've matched the background landscape features on two of Doc's photos to show the movement of the object (from right to left - notice the wake in the right photo), which eliminates the possibility (mentioned by Dinsdale, p17 this issue) of a stationary object, like a tree-branch, in a tidal flow.
2) Doc's drawing of the 'ugly' head, which opened and closed its mouth.
3) The appearance of the monster most of the time. It submerged as Shiels and Clarke took their photos from apx. 100 yards away.
4-6) Details, taken from Doc's photos, of the head and neck of the creature. They bear many similarities with Mary F's photos (see p17 this issue) and the classic Wilson, and O'Connor photos of Nessie (see In Search of Lake Monsters by Peter Costello (1974).

Drawings and photos copyright Anthony Shiels - November 1976.

** ** ** ** ** ** ** ** ** ** ** ** ** **

Our cover is an engraving taken from PH Gosse's Romance of Natural History (1859).

from Puck Fare, Ponsanooth, Truro, Cornwall.- 25p.) This is all the more interesting because this was at least two months before Dr Rines was to release his now celebrated photo showing a 'gargoyle' head, with stumpy horns, taken in Loch Ness (see News 14/13).))

Doc told me: 'I've done exactly what I said I'd do...I've captured the beastie...on film!...and all good sympathetic-magicians should know what that means...now I have its image on film, that should give me a certain amount of power according to standard magical practice...if my theatrical dragon-invoking antics really caused the monster to appear, then it should be possible to repeat the experiment.' But Doc has little enthusiasm or motive for another encounter. He at least is certain Morgawr exists: 'I know that the thing we saw and photographed was not a seal, a skin-diver, a dolphin, shark or boat...or radio-controlled rubber model. It was, and is a very unusual creature...we saw a bloody sea-serpent!' Nor is Doc convinced that even a herd (or is it shoal?) of monsters materialized before the massed lenses of every reporter in the whole Southwest would convince them.

THE LOCAL PRESS REACTION

The whole Morgawr saga has been scandalously neglected and ignored by the national press (except for a few feeble, cynical lines) and by the scientific establishment, who don't seem to care a hoot about the possible existence of a new unidentified animal within a day's journey of the British Museum.

The local press reaction was a little different, and we recognize that since the days of Fort's investigations very little has changed in the way the press becomes party to the putting down of a mystery. It seems to be a sort of antibody reaction, if we see society as an organism and the damned data as the irritant. At first it is a novelty, then as preposterous pseudo-explanations fail to account for the mystery, it becomes by turns something boring, or hoaxed, and then frightening. We are dealing with events that are nothing less than confrontations between natural (if rare and unexpected) processes of the universe and our own blinkered cozy world-view conditioned by the mass-concensus of what that ought to be. Naturally the strange phenomena win tentacles down because they, in Fort's phrase, are 'more nearly real'. But sometimes the resistance against new or threatening information or events takes bizarre forms. It is easy to see conspiracies or the shadowy MIB behind things. Perhaps man is a more organic unit than its parts like to think and we all react in some grand strategy on the orders of the Whole to close ranks against Change.

Here is Doc's view of what happened: 'During the last few days (written on 26 November), the local press boys have expressed the opinion that the whole thing must be a fake, simply because I was on the spot, and I'm known as a magician. David was warned by a fellow reporter (Mike Truscott of the West Briton) 'not to underestimate the powers of the Doc'...implying that I was not to be trusted. The editor of the West Briton will now only print reports of Morgawr sightings if my name is never mentioned in connection with the beast! The editor of the Falmouth Packet avoids me carefully these days. The BBC showed an interest in the fact that David had seen and photographed Morgawr...but lost it when my name was mentioned. Dave, himself, has recently asked me if I'd rigged up some cunningly controlled rubber model monster, programmed to act like the real thing on that fateful Wednesday morning!!! He's worried and puzzled by the whole episode...including the chicken-livered reactions of his fellow journalists, whispering like nervous old women about Doc Shiels and his nasty monster...Dave, although he was there and saw the thing, is not totally convinced...he thinks I may have been responsible for the appearance of the animal although he has no ideas as to how I could have possibly done such a thing (unless as mentioned, I used a 15ft rubber monster, beautifully made and expertly controlled...I wish I knew how that sort of thing could be achieved without tons of money and the services of a Hollywood special-effects man! Maybe I'm becoming paranoid about press men - they certainly seem disturbed by the fact that one of their number (the respectable editor of a glossy county magazine, no less!) actually happened to be unlucky enough to find himself on the spot, in the company of the dastardly Doc, when our Morgawr decided to lift his head above the waves.'

If anyone wanted to do a thesis on the reactions of everyday people to encounters with the unknown; or to the press 'kill-off' time as the critical period the press will tolerate a mystery before they kill it off, then FT would co-operate with the stories on file here. Weird, isn't it? However, I'm mindful that Doc too was sceptical of his own first encounter with Morgawr, as were some of the other witnesses, according to their own admissions. It will be interesting to see David Clarke's story when it comes out. We'll keep you posted.

TIM DINSDALE ON THE SHIELS PICTURES.

Doc wrote to us saying that Tim Dinsdale, the famed investigator of Loch Ness and author of three mandatory books on the subject, had examined his evidence and been very imp-

ressed. I asked Tim if he would care to give FT a statement of his opinion. His letter, dated 12 January 1977, contains some very interesting information:

'Dear Bob - As you have asked for my opinions on the Cornish sea-serpent 'Morgawr' appearances off Falmouth this last year (1976) particularly in relation to the sighting recorded by Dave Clarke, editor of Cornish Life, and Doc Shiels, on November 17th in the mouth of the Helford River - I will be glad to make comment.'

'I visited Falmouth in May after talking to Bill Cane and Tony Shaw at Penelewey, two interested local researchers, and had the good fortune to meet Doc Shiels, and several other local witnesses, including a lady who had seen the beast in the sea, but quite close up off Pendennis Castle Point ((see p14 this issue for our own belated mention)). She described a large, hump-backed, long-necked animal with a strange head with 'horns' on top of it - which she and another, male, adult witness watched, as it dipped below the surface to come up with a live-and-kicking conger eel in its mouth. Her sincerity, and obvious amazement, came over on the tape, also the fact that she was familiar with the usual sea animals - like seals.'

'As you probably know there had been some photographs published in the Falmouth Packet ((5 March 1976; News 15/16; and below -Editor)) purporting to show the beastie - taken by an anonymous person, a certain 'Mary P', and perhaps a dozen or so other eyewitness accounts, some from local mackerel fishermen.'

'I left Falmouth feeling the trip had not been wasted. Later I had a note from Doc indicating that he and members of his family had seen something strange off-shore ((see Doc's wife's account on p12 this issue)), then later he was kind enough to send me some blow-ups of the more recent Nov 17th sur-facing.'

'I wrote back asking for more info and perhaps a tape recording, which he and Dave Clarke kindly put together - the latter sending me pictures from his own film-strip taken with a Pentax and telephoto lens, which mysteriously double exposed, showing the head and neck. Actually they are not too bad, and show an object which is hard to identify, producing a very distinctive wake. Fixed objects like poles and tree-branches can produce such a wake in a tidal river mouth or estuary, (I saw a magnificent sea-serpent 'head and neck' doing this in the Solway Firth last summer, with the tidal rip providing 'movement'.), but this does not explain what Doc and Dave saw, which they said was clearly animate - flesh and blood alive, with features clear to them at about 100ft. I believe them.'

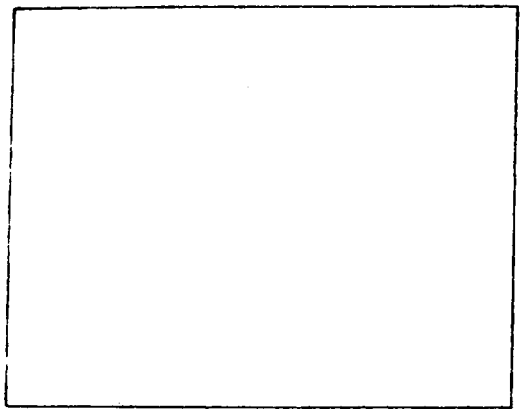
'Looking for a rational explanation, bearing in mind the dimension of 12-15ft, we can rule out otters - and no seal has a head like that. The only possible alternative is a giant leathery turtle which had been swept off course by the Gulf Stream. ((We mentioned some notes in this connection on FT16/19. See also the curious Falmouth monster of 1926 above, and our reportage of the Barmouth monster in issues 10, 11, 15 and 16 -ed.))

'Unlikely though it may seem, this happens occasionally, and in 1971 I actually saw a gigantic turtle ashore in Mallaig (W. Highlands W. coast) which had been killed by a trawler's prop. It weighed about "13 hundredweight" according to the fishermen - an immense reptile, a marvellous specimen about 3 times bigger than the one in the Natural History Museum ((London)) - but it was shipped south for "soup" I believe, and nothing more was seen of it. The head of such a turtle bears some resemblance to the photos, but it has no 'horns' and no ridge, and the back of a leathery turtle is unmistakeable, being ridged with knobbly lumps. This does not fit the description either.'

'Altogether the 'Morgawr' sightings are a puzzle, but seem real, notwithstanding the odd events which appear to coincide with them. Perhaps, with luck, 1977 will produce some more and better photographs - maybe another 'jaws' incident with bathers vacating the briney at speed!

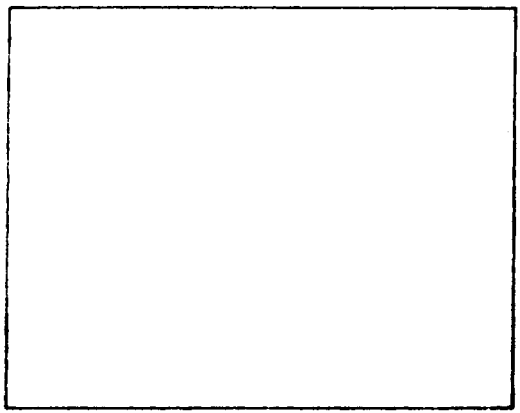
Regards: (signed) Tim Dinsdale.'

The two photos taken by Mary P from Rosemullion Head just south of Falmouth sometime in the first 2 weeks of February 1976, against the sun (hence the bleaching out of the sea). The negs are unobtainable, Mary P having sold them to an anonymous American and remaining untraceable herself. Despite this note of dubiety the photos show a credible form and movement.



ALIENS AMONG US

by Peter Roberts



Recent issues of The Fortean Times have devoted considerable space to 'Mystery Animals' (MAs) sighted in Britain. Basically these have been headline-makers: large creatures or occasionally swarms of lesser ones that have attracted the attention of the average passer-by and have found their way into the local newspapers. But what else is crawling around in the undergrowth, unnoticed except by the few? For that matter, what about the undergrowth itself?

On the basis that for every large exotic creature in Britain there should be hundreds of smaller strangers, I've been looking through a few of the periodicals and books in the British Library's massive natural history collection. The result? The United Kingdom is packed with small aliens of every kind. I've just peeped at the tip of an iceberg - the subject is vast and complex. All I can do at the moment is present some patchy notes which I hope may offer a glimpse of the field and an indication of some of the problems in investigating it.

These notes, on various creatures and plants, are roughly grouped in families. I've ignored mammals since they've already been comparatively well-covered - the larger ones, at least (if Britain is infested with invading voles and strange shrews, that's just too bad).

BIZARRE BIRDS.

Surprisingly, this has proved to be the most difficult area to research, largely because bird-watchers in the UK are numerous and well-organised. This means that there is an ornithological establishment, conservative and dogmatic, which imposes, or at least encourages, an impressive and oppressive self-censorship in the reporting of strange birds. A Rare Birds Committee vets all reports, giving only its approval to those birds that can be shown to have arrived in Britain on the wing; the aim of most local societies seems to be to pander to this committee for which they show a remarkable respect. As a result, few exotic birds are ever mentioned - only borderline cases (which are usually bracketed in the bird lists, awaiting the committee's ruling). Look, I myself have seen at least two feral budgies and, recently, a gaudy little red-beaked bird (Java sparrow?); but the British ornithologists ignore these 'obvious escapes' and introductions.

Perhaps some rogue group is keeping track of these avian oddities - if so, I haven't traced them. In the meantime, here's some sparse notes from the conventional journals.

A flamingo at Benacre Ponds; this is a borderline bird, a 'rare vagrant', hence it made the list; but a later note gives it the chop in typical fashion: "It proved to be of the Chilean race and was therefore obviously classed as an escape" (Lowestoft Field Club - 24th Ann. Rep., 1969). 'Obviously' - though nobody bothered to check... Three white pelicans at Breydon Water (Ibid: 26th, 1971) attracted some attention, if only as a mass break-out (and it's another borderline bird for the committee's attention). I've other scattered notes, all of them hopefuls for the rare vagrants section of the British Birds lists - even the following rarity: Two Sudan Crowned Cranes (a European record, if confirmed) sighted in the fenlands from June 1958 to at least February 1959, with two newly-fledged young as well. Inquiries failed to reveal any known escapes (Nature in Cambridgeshire, No 2, 1959).

Before leaving the birds, I should note that the official lists are prepared to accept vagrants from as far afield as East Asia, North Africa, and Western North America. I should also mention bird-ringing, where records should be unequivocal and straightforward; the trouble is, I haven't been able to find the annual Ringing Reports issued by the B.T.O. They'd be worth checking for anomalies, like the following: a knot, ringed on The Wash and recovered in Liberia eight days later - that's a quick 3500 miles or so! (BTO News, No 1, 1964). Finally, here's a quotation from R Whitlock's 'Rare and Extinct Birds of Britain': "Obviously if we were to count all introductions we should have a truly formidable list". 'Obviously' again - but just where is this formidable list?

ROGUE REPTILES.

This is better documented, thanks to JFD Frazer's "Introduced Species of Amphibians & Reptiles in Mainland Britain" (Brit. Jour. of Herpetology. Vol. 3 No 6, 1964). This includes notes on some twenty-eight foreign species, many of them in breeding colonies and a few in several localities throughout the UK. Most are said to be 'known introductions' and a few have pedigrees and histories; that's fine - all data on foreign species in Britain is worth having if we're trying to sort out the known from the unknown.

Frazer mentions a few reptiles found in Britain that are unaccounted for and classed as 'escapes'; they include Viperine Snakes in Kent, a Tessellated Snake in London, and many instances of Salamanders and Tortoises - he doesn't include reports of ultra-exotic species, largely because he's interested in potential breeding colonies of naturalised animals that can survive in this climate. Beyond this I've only a few reports, for example: two Italian Grass Snakes in Lowestoft (Low. Field Club - Ann. Rep., 1961).

MYSTERIOUS MOLLUSKS:

This may seem a ludicrous area of investigation, but amazingly AE Ellis's 'British Snails' lists a remarkable number of slimy foreigners in Britain and even more that we've exported abroad (here's a typical entry - Oxychilus alliarius: "Introduced into St Helena, Greenland, USA, Cape Colony, Australia & New Zealand"). A preliminary checklist (Jour. of Conchology, Vol 23) lists 38 alien species in the UK and Ellis's book (revised Ed., 1969) gives details and additions. It's too arcane a subject for most natural history clubs and the only other note I have is of a Japanese Sea Squirt (I think that's a mollusk!) in the Helford estuary (Jour. of the Camborne-Redruth N.H. Soc., Vol 2, pt 4, 1972). Otherwise, Ellis's handbook gives ample details of non-marine gastropods, and there's a special tit-bit for Forteans: "Whirlwinds can disperse molluscs and other animals" (p.37) - I thought you'd like that!

CURIOUS CRUSTACEANS:

There's just a single oddment here: Talitroides dorrieni - a land sandhopper from New Zealand which has established itself in the Scilly Isles and Cornwall: it has a curious preference for the plant Helxine, another alien but one from the Mediterranean coast! (Jour. of the Camborne-Redruth N.H. Soc, Vol 2, pt 5, 1973).

BARBARIAN BUTTERFLIES:

This is the area I first thought of when researching this article, since I'd already come across two butterfly mysteries. The first is the presence in Britain of the Milkweed or Monarch butterfly,

an American species which is infrequently but repeatedly found over here. Nobody knows how it arrives - different writers put forward different explanations: it may fly across the Atlantic (possibly resting on the water!) or it may be released from the holds of banana boats (though I have a reference to Milkweed sightings correlating with reports of American birds). Who knows? The things just keep on returning. The other mystery is possibly my favourite contender for a genuine Fortean oddity. It's the case of Albin's Hampstead Eye, a distinctive butterfly mentioned in J Petiver's 'Papilionum Britanniae' (1717) as being taken on Hampstead Heath; for many years this was the only known specimen and it was variously considered as a freak hybrid or the last of an extinct species. It was finally found to be alive and well - in East Asia and Australia. As one commentator says, "It is interesting to speculate on how it came to be recorded from such an unlikely locality and at that period of leisurely travel".

Most butterfly books ignore aliens; the exception is TG Howarth's 'South's British Butterflies' (1973) which gives details of over thirty 'introduced' species from Asia, Africa and America found at one time or another in the UK. Unusually, he even includes oddities found in greengrocer's shops and so on - an area, important to us, which is continually ignored in reference books and periodicals on the British flora and fauna.

INTRUSIVE INSECTS:

Butterflies are a comparatively easy subject to deal with; but there are just too many other insects (80% of all known animals are insects and there are over 20,000 species on the British list alone) All I have are a few notes on obvious aliens, namely New Zealand Stick Insects, two species of which (the 'smooth' and the 'prickly') are naturalised in Cornwall (Jour. of the Camborne-Redruth N.H. Soc., Vol 3, pt 1, 1974, and Chinery's 'Field Guide to the Insects of Britain & N. Europe, 1973).

PERTURBED PLANTS:

A glance at any garden will indicate the extent of the problem here. There are vast numbers of exotic plants in Britain, many of which are now classed as naturalised or appear on the lists as 'casuals'. Clapham, Tutin & Warburg's 'Flora of the British Isles' (2nd Ed., 1962) includes a fair number. I've also come across monographs such as "Alien plants in SE England" (Trans. of the Kent Field Club, vol 3, No 1, 1965) and "Alien Plants of Cornwall" (Jour. of the Camborne-Redruth N.H. Soc., Vol 2, pt 2, 1970). Trees are hopeless: there are thirty-five native species in Britain, out of roughly 1700 now found here! (Mitchell's 'Field Guide to the Trees of Britain & N. Europe' is useful). Fungi are also awkward, since their distribution is little known and they grow quickly and furtively; only the weirdest are likely to attract attention. Ramsbottom's 'Mushrooms & Toadstools' mentions a few of these, possibly Australasian but found in Britain on one or two occasions.

CONFUSED CONCLUSION:

The above notes are sketchy, to put it mildly; but they should at least indicate something of the vast wealth of our exotic plant and animal species. Where did they all come from? Many are documented introductions (most of those 1700 alien tree species seem to have a firm pedigree for example); others are likely to be escapes (like my favourite record of a feral yak which lived for many years in the Derbyshire moors); many are accidental introductions (I've several reports of things scuttling out of banana crates). But there's still a residue of inexplicable oddities, less flamboyant than a puma in Surrey perhaps, but worth a moment's thought.

There are plenty of local and specialist journals to provide sources of information. Those quoted above don't actually do my reading justice; most of the newsletters and transactions are conservative, almost as bad as the ornithologists', and only print notes on the acceptable wildlife of Britain. An exception like that of the good people of Camborne & Redruth, is a welcome relief to the monotonous catalogues of thoroughly native species. From now on, I'll try to specialize - examine a few notable cases perhaps. But anyone can join in - how about discomforting the bird watchers with an open-minded examination of the bird-ringing reports? Be my guest, please...

Peter Roberts, 1976

((Editor's note -- we have accumulated quite a few notes on some of the aliens mentioned by Peter; some animals appear in this issue, but the birds and snakes will be kept for another time when we have more space.))

THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE EVENING

Few can have failed to notice the rash of newspaper stories concerning the mysterious 'booms' afflicting the west of Britain throughout November 76 ...events which received considerable but largely uncoordinated and contradictory coverage.

The first thing to notice about the reporting is its relative exclusiveness ...nowhere is there any mention of similar past cases, although this sort of event seems to happen all the time (See Fort: Books: Index-'Explosions', including the classic 'Barisal Guns' case, and the News 3/15-16). The mystery was finally 'solved' by attributing the noises to Concorde, but as we shall see this leaves many pieces of the puzzle unexplained...and consequently forgotten.

First though, in order to keep the chronological record straight, we must move north to Bangor and Anglesey, where on Saturday 15 Feb 76, at an unnamed time in the afternoon,'a tremendous mystery bang' shook property, rattled windows and swayed light-fittings. This obviously came as a surprise to the staff of the marine science station at Menai Bridge, who seemingly don't allow for earthquakes outside office hours... their seismograph was switched off for the weekend. However, tremors have been recorded in the Menai Straits before, and this was the conclusion again. A microbaragraph was switched on, and this recorded no disturbance in the atmosphere...which seems curious, considering the apparent volume of the noise. (North Wales Chronicle, 19 Feb 76. Cr: Phil Ledger)

The Somerset epic began at around 10-00am, 13 Aug 76 (Bath Evening Chronicle; Cr: John Michell). There was a noise described as a kind of juddering and a series of loud bangs or crackling. The noise lasted several seconds and the air seemed to shake, according to witnesses. A vapour trail was seen overhead, and Concorde was immediately blamed. However, British Airways and BAC swiftly informed the public that none of their Concordes had been out of the hangar for three weeks, and tried to shift the blame onto military aircraft...even so, all aircraft are banned from flying supersonic over populated areas. These questions only have any relevance if we assume that the noise and the vapour trail were connected; and as Forteans we know that the obvious ain't necessarily so. Interestingly, the same report mentions an earthquake in the Radstock/Bath area, one week short of 50 years previously, in the morning of 20 Aug 1926... and also that there was an unexplained 'mini-storm' in nearby Frome the preceding day (12 Aug 76) which threw a 4cwt fibre-glass boat-shell over a hedge and broke fences and trees.

We have no more data on the Somerset noises until November, although it is obvious from the reports that they had been occuring for some months previously. Basically, the story is of a vibrating double-bang, sometimes followed by a second double-noise, occuring most nights of the week just after 9-00pm, maintaining the same clock-time despite the change from British Summer Time to GMT. Much of the attention seems to have focussed on Mr George Lawrence of North Petherton, Somerset, and various experts descended on his home throughout late November to make tests and recordings. The noises were first described as 'vibrations and underground thunder', and were thought to be subterranean explosions. They had been going on thro-

ughout the summer, and were heard in 3 counties; Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. By 16 Nov 76, the Civil Aviation Authority and scientists from Bristol University had joined the Police in the investigation, and the possibility of Air France Concordes being responsible was mentioned, though they were thought to be too far away.

On the 17th, UFO activity is mentioned with a bright orange ball being seen in the sky at 9-03pm, to be followed by the bump at 9-05. There were also references to considerable UFO activity in the west country, including more orange glows, an alleged landing at Winchester, humming noises, and pink-eyed men running round the countryside. Certain parallels were drawn with the noises heard at Warminster some years ago (See A Shuttlewood: 'The Warminster Mystery', Tandem Pb, 73)

At the same time, Concorde and military aircraft were supposedly cleared of blame, as the bumps had occurred when they were not flying. Also, an unnamed aero-dynamicist said that the bangs sounded nothing like sonic booms.

By the 19th, bangs, rattles and groans were being reported from various other parts of the country, including Reading and Chelsea, London. Dr Robert Adams of Bristol University stated about the bangs: "I have no theories at all except that it was not caused by an aircraft." Two days later, Dr Adams began to change his opinion, describing the noises as "airborne and man-made". Bangs were also reported at 6-30 & 8-00pm, but these were rapidly and conveniently forgotten, as was the extra bang at 10-20pm on the 22nd. Birds were said to be disturbed by low-frequency vibrations some 15 seconds before the bangs were heard.

22 Nov also brought a newcomer to the explanation field. He was Dr HK Zienkiewicz of Exeter University. He attributed noises to the decaying sonic booms of Concorde, still carried through the air after the 'plane had slowed to sub-sonic speed. He made his statement 'to set the fears of the public in the West Country at rest'. Whether that calmed down the inhabitants of Horsham, Sussex, some hundred miles to the east, we don't know ...but they were apparently having bangs every Saturday at 6-30pm.

By 27 Nov 76, the national papers were writing the story's epitaph. It was now 'definitely' Concorde, the sonic booms carried an unexpected distance by a combination of temperature, humidity and wind. Incredibly, it was stated that the booms arrived every night except Tuesday ...the only night Concorde did not fly in from Washington. And every boom fitted in with the British or French timetable for the supersonic plane. Considering all that has been said above, this understandably caused your editors to boggle somewhat. The good Dr Adams proved more flexible, however, and completed an admirable about-face by stating his certainty that Concorde was to blame. (Story compiled from: Daily Mail, 15 Nov 76, Bristol Evening Post, 16 Nov, Guardian, 17 Nov, 18 Nov, Western Daily Press, 18 Nov, Guardian, Western Morning News, Western D. Press, 19 Nov, Guardian, 20 Nov, Observer, 21 Nov, Guardian, Western D. Press, Sun, D. Mirror, 22 Nov, Scunthorpe Evening Telegraph, 23 Nov, D. Mirror, 24 Nov, Sun, 27 Nov, Sunday Times, 28 Nov, Guardian, 2 Dec, Aerial, 7 Dec 76. Cr: R Sandell, J Michell, K Rogers, N Watson).

That effectively put an end to the story, at least as far as the national dailies were concerned, and the only other reference we have is from the Cornish & Devon Post, 11 Dec 76 (Cr: N Watson): the inhabitants of North Cornwall were getting together a petition to present to their MP, to have the noises reduced. Whether they succeeded or not, we don't know. The papers, at least, have been quiet ever since.

Concorde wasn't quite out of trouble though. An AFP bulletin for 1 Dec 76 (Cr: K Rogers) reported that earth tremors in NW Spain, measuring 3 on the Richter scale, were being blamed on the plane by experts in Vigo, Galicia. They were all felt early in the morning. The story was already dead as far as British papers were concerned, and the only newspaper that seems to have picked up the story is the South China Morning Post (H.K.), 2 Dec 76 (Cr: Ion Will). How much else have we missed because the editors got bored with the story?

We interrupt the end of this section to include some last minute information sent by Ken Rogers. Ken was listening to John Dunne's news progamme on Radio 2 (5pm, 19 Nov 76) and managed to note the story of a man who phoned from Porlock, Somerset: 'All my friends and family began hearing these strange bangs which happened about 9pm each evening, 20 years ago. As children we were very frightened and taught to call it the 'Big Bang' or 'Big Gun'. I'm now married and still living in Porlock, and still hear this odd noise, and the sound hasn't changed in

all those years...' (Whaaat! 20 years ago!)

HUMMING AN UNHAPPY TUNE

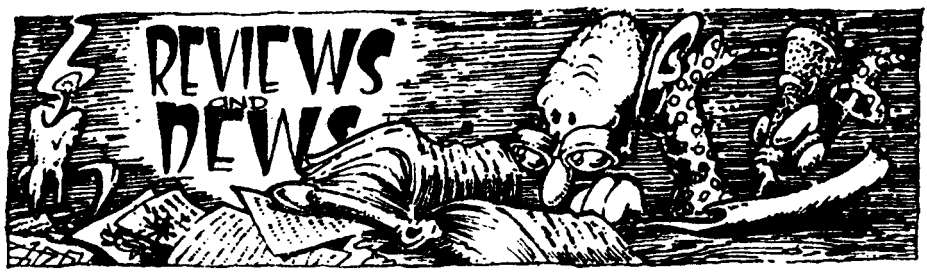
Much more persistent, and still unsolved, mystery noises have received less coverage: extremely faint but distressing hums and buzzes which have plagued numerous householders throughout Britain. The earliest story we have is from autumn 1975, when Mr Donald Wood, of Dorstone, Herefordshire, first became aware of a faint, high-pitched buzz during a power-cut caused by a storm. At first he thought it was distant machinery, but then discovered that none had been working during the power-cut. He soon found he could hear it all the time, not only at home, but in the car and at work...and his wife could hear it too. A couple of months passed, and Mr Wood, an amateur pianist, identified 3 notes in the sound: fifth octave A flat, A natural, and B flat. Eventually, a blind piano tuner, Mr Berris, came to the house, heard the noise and, without prompting, picked out the same notes. Then, as if he had caught some infectious disease, he found he could still hear the noise when he left the house and returned to London; and other callers at the house 'took it with them' as well.

August 76 brought Mr Paul Wallace of Poole, Dorset on the scene, although he had apparently been campaigning for four years to have a scientific investigation into the noises, having collected letters from sufferers in various parts of the country, including reports of four suicide notes complaining of noises that no one else could hear. He described the noise as like a diesel engine, fluctuating in volume and sometimes inflicting intense pressure on the eardrums. There seem to be two different types of noise: in one case the sufferer carries the sound with him wherever he goes, in the other it is localised in one place, for there is also a mention of a man in Berkshire, in 1975, who slept in a hotel to escape a similar noise.

Adding to Mr Wallace's campaign was Miss Lydia Gilbert of Bognor Regis, who recorded the mystery hum on cassette during June 76, apparently the same noises as Mr Wallace was hearing. It was estimated that one person in 10,000 hears the sounds.

With Mr Wallace attempting to get the matter raised in parliament, the investigations started. Numerous theories were put forward, and mostly rejected, including: the sufferer hearing the sound of his own blood circulation, tooth-filling radio-receivers, vibrating gas mains, street-lamps, or even echoes from the hollow core (sic) of the Earth.

Prof Brian Clarkson of the Institute of Sound and Vibration Research acknowledged that the problem exists, and that 'quite a lot of research' was being carried out on the sound. But so far we have heard nothing in the way of results. (Sunday Express, 30 Nov 75; D. Express. 5 Aug 76; S. Express, 8 Aug 76; D. Express, 10 Aug 76; Evening Standard, 10 Aug 76: Cr: I Thompson, J&C Bord, V Martin, K Rogers, RG Twine, S Nicholls).



RAWS

INFO have begun to restructure themselves begining with a Washington DC phone listing under 'Charles Hoy Fort', and a new address: 7317 Baltimore Ave, College Park, MD 20740, USA. Mail to the old Box No. will still reach them - but not so quickly.

There will be an exhibition of original paintings, prints and sculpture on the 'Earth Mysteries' theme at the Acme Gallery, 43 Shelton St, London WC2, for 3 weeks from 22 March 77. Material by Thom, Michell and Critchlow will also be on display. At the same time the Research into Lost Knowledge Organization (RILKO) will issue their third book in the 'Studies in Patterns' series, to

include original articles by Devereux, the Bords, Raine, Michell, Graves, Thom, Critchlow, and Glover. This will be published as a limited edition at £2.35 (inc p&p) initially. You can reserve a copy by sending a cheque to The Ley Hunter: Box 152, London N10 1EP.

Linda Johnson of Fairfax, Virginia has designed and made a few 'Charles Fort' medallions. They are 1½" diameter, with a profile of Charlie, and the quote, 'One measures a circle beginning anywhere' on opposite faces, complete with chain. Send £2.00/$3.00 to Fortean Times: Box 152, London N10 1EP, and we'll forward the order. Includes p&p.

As we go to print, David Watson, head of religious education at Rickmansworth Comprehensive School, Herts, has been dismissed for refusing to teach Darwinian evolution in place of a factual belief in Adam and Eve. He appealed to the council against his dismissal and lost - next he plans to take the matter before an industrial tribunal under the 1944 Education Act which says no teacher may be 'deprived of an advantage' because of his religious opinions. You might be amused to note how the matter is specified in the Herts. Council syllabus, drawn up in 1954: 'The Genesis stories of creation, read as their writers intended them to be and not as literalist interpreters have read them, do not conflict with evolutionary theories... They are, of course, only part of the collection of the myths and legends - Hebrew religious folklore - which make up the first 11 chapters of Genesis and they should be seen in that setting.' (My underlining. I wonder just what they think myths and folklore are! - Ed.) To his credit Mr Watson says he knows evolution theory is an alternative view, but 'cannot accept that it is the only view permissable.' This is an issue of fundamental importance and should be interesting to watch - academia may go all out to squash Mr Watson, but could be stopped, not by the triumph of a better cosmology, but by modern employment legislation. Incidentally, as the Sunday Telegraph 23 January 1977, points out, this case is almost a reversal of the trial of John Scopes in Dayton, Tennessee (a mere 52 years ago!) for crossing the education authorities by teaching evolution not Biblical creation. Genes vs Genesis, you might say!

Forteana in the media. Some recent films have had some interesting sidelights. The vastly overestimated The Omen portrayed the devil as our old pal the Black Dog, albeit a tame looking one. Apart from the basically facile interpretation of the portents of the coming of the Antichrist given in Revelations, was the interpretation of his birthdate from the 'Number 666' - ie 6th day of 6th month. They conveniently forgot the other 6! You might like to know that 6th June 1976 saw a huge fireball come down NW to SE, to hit the sea somewhere between E Anglia and Kent in the Thames estuary. We're waiting now for Ivan Bunn to tell us that that evening a huge Black Dog revisited the churches at Blythburgh and Bungay.

One film we can wholeheartedly recommend for sheer excellence and beauty in all departments is Picnic at Hanging Rock, an Australian film about the disappearance on St Valentine's Day, 1900, of 3 girls - a 4th came back from their mountaintop date with destiny but could not remember what had occurred. No bodies were found, nor was the mystery solved. The blurb says it actually happened - we'd like to know more as it's not in Fort. The direction steers strongly & unswervingly between providing answers and empty mystery-mongering to revel in a brooding, haunted suggestion of something beyond our comprehension. A truly Fortean film (I don't often say that!) and I urge you to see it.

There is still time to catch the multimedia exhibition 'Pompeii AD 79' at the Royal Academy of Arts, London - it closes on February 27.

HARDBACKS

Velikovsky Reconsidered by the Editors of Pensee. (Sidgwick & Jackson 1976; £5.50; pp260; index) -- It is rather frustrating that if one wished to quote this book in a scientific paper the reference would include "edited by the Editors of Pensee". Confidence is not increased by the note which states that Pensee was an organ of the Student Academic Freedom Forum which discontinued publication in 1975. Still no names and addresses, and the brief information about the status and qualifications of the 19 or so authors is hidden in the text. Unfortunately the casual scientific reader may be unaware that Pensee was an excellent and responsible journal with lively and informative articles on all aspects of the Velikovsky affair, including much criticism and background material.

There is a brief summary of the theme of Worlds in Collision (1950) and Earth in Upheaval (1955), and then six sections covering the enormous range of Velikovsky's work in history, geology, astronomy, mythology and controversy. Part 1 - the appalling record of the response of nearly all the established scientists to Velikovsky's views and, what was far more offensive to

them, his pungent, racy, and somewhat arrogant style. Part 2 - evidence for earlier "unlikely" solar system body alignments and absences. Part 3 - attempts to explain the remarkable orbital changes necessary to support such catastrophic happenings as the ejection of Venus from Jupiter. Part 4 - the problems of the high temperature, retrograde rotation and atmospheric composition of Venus. Part 5 - the problems of the magnetism, origin and history of the Moon, and the age of its craters. Part 6 - the debate about Velikovsky and the continuing struggle for serious consideration and study of his researches into many branches of science.

On the whole this is a splendid book, particularly for those who have actually read Velikovsky in the original. A list of contributors and their status details would been a useful addition to the adequate index and lists of references. Some of the comments about electricity in the solar system should be read with caution in the absence of the criticisms which were published in Pensee. For instance, evidence quoted for a charge on the earth is equally valid for a charge between the ground and the upper atmosphere, a totally separate characteristic. The fascinating subject of Venus crops up in many places as well as in Part 4. Robert Treash (who are you? Please contact.) quotes Varro of ancient Rome, writing about earlier times: "To the brilliant star Venus...there occurred so strange a prodigy, that it changed its size, color, form, course, which never happened before nor since". Of course it did, as many others have testified! Read the book and see for yourselves!

-- Eric Crew. January 1977.

((For further material on the Velikovsky Affair and catastrophic themes, see our review of Kronos, under 'Journals'. Eric Crew has agreed to write us an article on the Venus problem - Ed.))

The Indefinite Boundary by Guy Lyon Playfair. (Sounevir Press 1976; £4.25; pp320; index, references & photos) -- Continuing GLP's solo voyage into South American psychic phenomena, and detailing the mediums, investigators, healers, theorists and victims of polts, reincarnation, spiritism, etc. I cannot do justice to the book's wealth of new information in so short a space, but as it goes into circulation it (and GLP) will be quoted frequently, as will his earlier The Flying Cow. Not only is this one of the first records in English of the phenomena of Brazil, it will remain one of the best and most readable.

Many books are being held back til next issue to review them more fully.

PAPERBACKS

Strange Minds compiled and published by William R Corliss (Sourcebook Project, Glen Arm, MD 21057, USA. 1976; $7.95; pp285; subject, author, source indexes.) The Unexplained by William R Corliss. (Bantam paperback, 1976; $1.95/75p; pp 338; subject, date, place, author, & source indexes.) -- Strange Minds is volume P1 in the Sourcebook series and covers reprinted reference material from rare and out-of-print sources on the following aspects of mental phenomena: automatic writing; delusions, possession, hypnogogic and other hallucinations; scrying; dowsing; deja vu; sleep and dream phenomena; telepathy; calculating prodigies, memory feats and eidetic images; out-of-the-body experiences; fire-walking; stigmata and skin writing; oddities of perception; and poltergeist noises. The selection is mind-watering and this volume is up to the standard set by the previous ones. We fully endorse this project as a set of references no serious researcher or library can afford to be without. These volumes will be listed next issue, and you'll be able to order via FT (to ease the transfer of money). Meanwhile, if you'd like a sampler of the more physical data in the 2 Strange Phenomena volumes, try The Unexplained. I'm sure you'll find it worth it. This book covers archeological, astronomical, geophysical, and geological enigmas.

Glastonbury - Ancient Avalon: New Jerusalem edited by Anthony Roberts. (Zodiac House Publications, 7 Hugon Rd, Fulham, London SW6 3EL; £2.70; pp106; bibliographies, illos.) -- Tony declares that this anthology of esoteric and exoteric views about the ancient sacred site of Glastonbury is his personal tribute. The list of contributors is impressive: Mary Caine, the Pennicks, John Michael, Jess Foster, Kenneth Knight, John Michell, John Nicholson, Donald Cyr, and the Roberts themselves (who also produced the book). The articles cover a wide range from the factual approaches of topography and gematria to personal speculation on the mystique and meaning of Glastonbury as a multilevel symbol. Other sections deal with the zodiacs, the Holy Grail, the maze, the hidden treasures, the underground tunnels and the geomantic structure of the Glastonbury complex. A baroque metaphysical synthesis by John Michell makes a fine flourish to top off the book. Many text and decorative illustrations. (When ordering from Anthony Roberts - address above - please include 40p postage.)

Recent reprintings in paperback:

The Magic of Findhorn by Paul Hawken (Bantam 1976; $2.25; pp343; illos.) in which our rather glib hero spends a year at this miraculous garden in Scotland and sees many wondrous things, like giant cabbages growing in sand, and hears of the gardeners' pacts with elemental beings to make the garden grow. Very Special People by Frederick Drimmer (Bantam 1976; $1.95/85p; pp357; biblio, many photos.) Compassionate and informative biographies of many famous human curiosities like 3-legged, rubber-skinned, gorilla-looking people that supersedes chunks of Edwards' Strange People. There are Giants in the Earth by Michael Grumley (Panther 1976; 60p; pp155; index, biblio, photos.) The best British Yeti and Bigfoot book, well written with insight.

JOURNALS

INFO Journal now published from: 7317 Baltimore Ave, College Park, MD 20740, USA. No19: Steve Moore with a pioneering article on gravity-defying feats in the Chinese martial and meditational arts; Paul Willis on the falls of ice at Timberville, Virginia. No20: (with Richard Hall as the new editor) FW Holiday on the 'Great Serpent Mystery'; Stuart Greenwood on the Meydum-Avebury connection; A Moraru on a UFO landing in Romania; plus notes on historial Forteana. $10.00/£5.00/year -- or as a joint sub with FT, $14.00/£7.00/year. Payments to either INFO or FT.

Pursuit, the journal of SITU: Columbia, NJ 07832, USA. Summer 76: John Keel in another editorial on Fortean news problems; a symposium on land and water monsters; & Keel again in a concise summary of modern para-UFOlogy ((a big step for SITU!!!)). Membership $10.00/year.

Shadows, a newsletter from Tim Church covering (mainly but not exclusively) American monster material and sightings. Issue 2 includes a note on the possible sighting of the supposedly extinct Tasmanian Wolf. To receive Shadows just keep Tim supplied in stamps. Tim Church: PO Box 932, Missoula, MT 59807, USA.

Anomaly Research Bulletin, published monthly by the newly formed Michigan Anomaly Research, edited by David Fideler, covering (mainly but not exclusively) UFO and Fortean data on Michigan state. Write to Dave for a free sample of ARB (if you're in the USA, please send two 13¢ stamps): 7098 Edinburgh, Lambertville, Michigan 48144, USA.

Nessa Information Service. All interested in the antics of monsters and men in and around (mainly but not exclusively) Loch Ness will be interested to learn of the NIS Nessletter which gives up-to-date info on all aspects of the subject in a stencilled format, edited by Rip Hepple: Huntshieldford, St Johns Chapel, Bishops Auckland, Co Durham. £1.50/year (USA/Canada: $7.00/year/airmail).

The Braheian Debater, a free newspaper debating and defending the notion of a geocentric universe, with many notable contributors. PO Box 254, Sunnymead, CA 92388, USA.

Clypeus, and Gli Arcani, two high quality magazines of interest to Italian-reading Forteans from a stable of fine writers and researchers. Clypeus is (mainly but not exclusively) devoted to the folklore, mysteries and antiquities of Piedmont. Inquiries to Clypeus: Casella Postale 604, 10100 Torino Centro, Italy. Gli Arcani is a monthly covering the whole spectrum of the occult & the mysterious. Gli Arcani: 20162 Milano, V.le Ca Granada 2, Italy.

Kronos, modestly subtitled 'A Journal of Interdisciplinary Synthesis', taking up the banner of the defunct Pensee (with many of the same contributors) in promoting discussion, examination, criticism and development of Velikovsky's catastrophism. Recent issues have contained many original contributions from Velikovsky himself; a revised chronology of Egypt and Isr l; the correspondences between the gods and goddesses of various cultures and the major planets with references to events of astronomical violence; the problems of tektites, frozen mammoths, and the vanished dinosaurs; ancient records of astronomical dramas; and many articles of loving and impressive scholarship embracing astronomy, cosmology, astro-physics, history, psychology, anthropology, geology, archeology, and contemporary reaction. Quarterly: USA $10.00/ Overseas $18.00/year. Kronos: % Warner Sizemore, Glassboro State College, Glassboro, NJ 08028, USA. (Singles, $3.00).

New Horizons, the journal of the New Horizons Research Foundation, in Toronto. Much valuable and original research into poltergeists, psychokinesis, metal-bending, sound-phenomena, telepathy, healing, hypnotic regression, etc. For details write to: New Horizons Research Foundation: PO Box 427, Station F, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4Y 2L8.

Journal of the Society for Psychic Research June 1976 — 'DD Home and the Physical World' by Guy Lambert, suggesting that DDH chose sites of underground disturbances to hold his sittings. Interesting implications to be explored in a future FT article. SPR: 1 Adam & Eve Mews, London W8 6UQ.

The Christian Parapsychologist, an excellent little journal. June 1976: St Columba & psychic phenomena; Biblical condemnation of pagan occultism; biography of the late great Father Herbert Thurston, SJ; one of the foremost historians of psychic and mystical phenomena. $3.00/£1.00/year. The Christian Parapsychologist: 284 Earls Court Road, London SW5 9AS, UK.

Lantern: Autumn 1976: A "Fearefull and Terrible Noife in the Ayre...with a Stone that fell from the Sky..." in 1642; Cambridgeshire ghosts; and a zodiac at Bury. Winter 1976: More on the Puddingstone Track; a UFO at Hainford, Norfolk; a 'batmobile' at North Walsham; Norfolk's mystery flares. Each issue has usual features of local curiosities and other data (mainly but not exclusively) on East Anglian mysteries. The Borderline Science Investigation Group have just published their Proceedings (on investigating Borley Church); and a booklet on Haunted Lowestoft (35p). Lantern: Edited by Ivan Bunn: 3 Dunwich Way, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft NR32 4RZ, UK.

The Ley Hunter (continues in excellence and relevance, particularly the innovation of photographic exploration of leys etc. Our sister mag.) No73: the Bords on 'Ancient Sites and Folk Traditions'; photos of Maeshowe and Castlerigg; Steve Moore on the apparent 'Mirroring' in East/West Cosmotopography. No74 (a special 'Earth Energies' issue): Tom Graves on 'Earth Acupuncture'; photo of the 'Ring of Brogar'; speculations by Jimmy Goddard and M de Styrcea on 'Ley Power'; John Michell refuting the recent attacks by the school of statistical ley-hunters; instructions for making a 'Ley Energy Detector'; Richard Elen on the synthesis of the 'New Magic'. £2.00/year/$4.00 (USA $7.00/airmail); or available as a joint sub with FT, $9.00/£4.50, payable to either TLH or FT at: Box 152, London N10 1EP, UK.

Institute of Geomantic Research. Nigel Pennick continues his valuable publishing and reprinting venture with the IGR's 6th paper, 'The Round Church of Ophir, Orkney' by Ian Worden. The IGR now issues a journal. No1: E Anglian round towers; an eclipse in 2983BC; Forrest on the math-case against leys; ley metrology; the geomancy of Ely Cathedral; Glastonbury's tunnels. No2: artificial mounds and mark stones; ancient sun alignments; dowsing to locate leys; the Stanley zodiac; an appreciation of the Spanish architect Antoine Gaudi's geomantic work (yay!!!); a fold-out of Stukeley's 1724 engraving of Avebury. IGR: £3.00/year. IGR: 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8SD, UK.

Essex Dowser, a newsletter edited by Frank Dineen and privately circulated to members and friends of the Essex Dowsing Group. Often contains a log of Frank's own experiences and experiments. Donations welcomed. ED: 4 Brentwood Rd, Ingrave, Essex CM13 3QH.

Fate. May 76: sorcery in ancient Peru; a girl at the epicentre of some poltergeist fires in Washington. June 76: a lady's experiments in thoughtography; Curtis Fuller interviews Hynek; Arthur Guirdham on a woman who projects her double. July 76: the feats of ancient manpower (as opposed to hypothetical spaceships); experiences with a kahuna; Mangiacopra on the Florida giant octupus. August 76: UFOs like biological organisms; Maiden Castle hillfort. Sept 76: the Cabrera rocks, which suggest some dinosaurs coexisted with men; Louis E Navia 'In Defence of Ancient Astronauts'. Oct 76: 2 Alabama women chased by a UFO; the medium Katie King's performances in America; some Japanese kids who can Gellerize cutlery. Nov 76 (and the UK edition is superseded by importing the USA original): phantom aircraft; the old chestnut of the vanished Eskimo village; the return of Patience Worth. Dec 76:(with our friends Jerome Clark and J Gordon Melton installed respectively as Assistant Editor and Book Review Editor. Our congratulations to you both): Curtis Fuller on the weird thought pictures of Willi Schwanholz (the psychic photos with the biggest tits in the world, yet!); radio before Marconi; and Jerry Clark on pairs of Oklahoma monsters. Available on newsstands.

UFO Abduction in N. Dakota. A long and valuable account of the bizarre Sandy Larson incident (26 Aug 1975) - and hypnotic reconstruction by Dr Leo Sprinkle - investigated and written by Jerome Clark in UFO-Report Aug 1976.

MUFOB. Ns4: Rogerson and Rimmer on an important case of 'Bedroom Visitors' and dream (!) UFOs; Nigel Watson on winged entities. Ns5: Dr Ron Westrum on the sociology of UFO sighting and reporting; Roger Sandell on the current fetish for 'Monster as Metaphor.' MUFOB is an independant UFO-oriented mag which consistently researches parts other UFO mags can't or won't reach. 1 year a bargain at £1.80 (USA £2.50/airmail). John Rimmer (ed): 11 Beverley Rd, New Malden, Surrey KT3 4AW, UK.

SOBEPS News, the English abstract of Inforespace, the Journal of the Belgian Society for the Study of Spatial Phenomena (SOBEPS): No4: pt 3 of a study of Bermuda Triangle claims; analysis & history of the

'Warminster UFO photo' taken by Faulkner; analysis of a UFO-sound on tape. No5: analysis of Marjorie Fish's 'Star Map' from the Hill abduction; analysis of a Belgian UFO photo. Sobeps News: Boulevard Aristide Briand 26, 1070 Brussels, Belgium.

WATSUP Journal of the Wessex Association for the Study of Unexplained Phenomena. Local sightings and investigations, articles and notes. Edited by Nick Maloret: 180 Locksway Rd, Milton, Portsmouth. £1.50/year.

UFONIC News Data Sheet by Martin Shift & Martin Moffatt: 142 Frobisher Drive, Walcot, Swindon SN3 3HF. Don't know much about this but their Sept/Oct 76 issue consists of an interesting article by Terence Amey on 'Strange Clouds in Antiquity.'

EUFOSG Journal, being sightings, investigations and data on local UFOs, etc. Edited for the Essex UFO Study Group by DJ Goring Jr: 5 Carlton Terrace, Gt Cambridge Rd, London N18 1LB. Singles 25p plus postage. A recent scoop was a new case from 1944 of a spherical UFO inspecting four V1 rocket-bombs over London (EUFOSGJ Nov 76.)

Flying Saucer Review. 22:2: a light-emitting UFO hovers over a French car; three studies of an astonishing and important UFO abduction of 2 youths in Maine, USA, and their visions; a critique of 'The Sirius Mystery'. 22:3: incidents at Stonehenge apartments, N Bergen, NJ; UFOs and '4th dimension'; ambiguities in hypnotic regression of abductees; an entity in W Yorkshire. 22:4: UFOs seen from a 'Trident' in Spain; more Stonehenge, NJ, incidents; philosophical reflection on current status of UFOlogy; UFO meets helicopter in Ohio, 1973; another Brazilian teleportation; and another Brazilian abduction; UFOs on an astronomer's films. Each issue carries the usual round-up of world sightings and letters. £3.35/$9.00/yr. FSR Publications Ltd: West Malling, Maidstone, Kent, UK.

Journal of Meteorology. For a professional but independent assessment and record of (mainly but not exclusively) British weather, we recommend the J. Met., edited by Dr GT Meaden from : Cockhill House, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 9BG. Dr Meaden has an awareness of Fortean phenomena, and notes on contemporary and historical Fortean meteorological events frequently appear in the journal. Recent issues have valuable data on 'falls'; a pillar of light; the outstanding freaks and changes of 1976 weather; tornados in E Anglia, fireballs, and the 'inadequacy of broadcast weather reports.' £5.50/$16.00 ($24.00/airmail) 1year/12 issues.

New Scientist, 1976. 1 July: a new chronology of human evolution incorporating latest findings, 'The First 33 Million Years' by Stuart Fleming. 8 July: part 2 of the revised chronology of evolution. 29 July: the Viking discoveries on Mars. 5 Aug: biologists manage to fuse plant and animal cells together. 19 Aug: 'Mysteries at the centre of the galaxy.' 2 Sept: 'Hydrogen is a metal'!; N.Sci begins an investigation into cheating among scientists; human suggestibility and hypnosis; a new kind of lunar meteorite. 9 Sept: report on the 1976 NATO symposium on biofeedback & behaviour. 16 Sept: a critique of megalithic observatories. 28 Oct: report on a 15-year test of Einstein's general theory. 18 Nov: ring-shaped collisions between galaxies. 25 Nov: results of N.Sci's questionnaire on 'Cheating in Science' (some do - is anyone surprised?). 2 Dec: the current status of the 'Big Bang' theory of cosmology.

cont from p2/

TRUSS FUND...

...in which we acknowledge the kind support of: Connie Bell, Alex Ashcroft, Livingston Gearhart, JW Scaife, and Mike Ward. Thanks - your Hunt Emerson posters will be mailed when we get a gap in time.

CORRECTIONS TO FT18

Several errors last time:

p5 - according to the Thames and Hudson catalogue for 1977, the book by John Michell and myself, Phenomena, will cost £2.95, not £4.50 as we originally thought. Production of the book is in its final stages - we'll keep you informed.

p11 - the item listed under 24 Feb, the sighting by 3 teachers of a giant bird near San Antonio, Texas, has no suggestion of hoax attached to it. I was in error, confusing it with the item listed under 21 Jan. Apologies - and thanks to Jerry Clark for pointing this out.

p14 - the passage angle mentioned in para 2, column 2, should read 26°18', not 28°18'.

I also wish to apologise to Ken Rogers for not crediting him more fully for the huge amount of material on quakes and weather anomalies he sent us, used in 'Dairy of a Mad Planet'(p8). I was attempting to save space (Ken's name would have come up on the majority of items) but even so could have phrased my/our appreciation better.